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Glinys Cunnett



**Children with EBSD and staff working
together to create an environment
supportive of dealing with anger.**

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Abstract

It is possible that some children's Emotional, Behavioural and Social Difficulties (EBSD) were caused by their experiences in school. It is also possible that these children lacked the necessary verbal skills to communicate their feelings or viewpoints. Consequently, this could lead to them using aggression as an alternate means of communication. Therefore, these children may be facing two major difficulties in schools, i.e. an inappropriate school environment *and* a lack of skills to express their views. Thus, this research addresses these two areas of concern.

This work followed an action research model. Firstly, it was identified that our system to encourage children to avoid using aggression was not effective. This led to cycles of research designed to better support children during high arousal times. First, the views of the children were sought after they had a serious incident, (i.e. was physically aggressive) through a semi-structured interview. Staff who also witnessed or took part in the serious incident also gave their views, using an observation sheet and semi-structured questionnaire. In this way, data was collected on serious incidents, including viewpoints on what staff and children believed could be done in the future to avoid a similar incident occurring again.

After reflecting on the examination of the serious incidents it appeared that the children were possibly using aggression as a means of communication, since they probably lacked the necessary verbal skills to do so. This suggested that teaching children the necessary skills of communication would lead to them using less aggression. This research incorporated the teaching of such skills. Another benefit of teaching these lessons meant that staff would better understand why a child acted as they did. This knowledge would help the teacher to offer an environment more conducive to supporting children during high arousal times.

Further reflection centred on the how the children in our school who make progress in their behaviour, usually start an inclusion programme back to mainstream school. This raised issues of mainstream staff training and their possible training needs to include children identified as having EBSD in their classrooms. Therefore, mainstream teachers were invited to complete a semi-structured questionnaire related to their experiences of working on an inclusion programme.

The findings appear to show that explicitly encouraging children to give their views, alongside teaching of such skills may help to reduce aggression. Towards the end of the research period, some of the children's comments increased, whilst the number of serious incidents decreased. However, these findings must be taken with care due to the small sample size and influences other than the research intervention, e.g. changes in home circumstances.

The findings also indicate that after working on our inclusion programme, the mainstream teachers tended to feel more confident and better equipped to work with children identified as having EBSD. Again though, caution must be exercised since the sample size was small, but it possibly highlights the advantages of partnerships between special and mainstream school.

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Statement of originality

This material, in whole or part, has not been previously offered nor submitted for a degree or other qualification to any university or institution.

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Chapter 1

Rationale

A. Introduction

This work is concerned with supporting children identified as having 'Emotional, Behavioural and Social Difficulties' (EBSD) and the nature of school environments that may either exacerbate or ameliorate these difficulties. In particular, I consider how children can play a part in shaping their own environment, to ensure that the environment is the most supportive to them. This involves seeking children's views. Indeed, the mere seeking of children's views could be a major step in empowering the children to take control of their learning, as written by Jelly *et. al.* (2000). A hypothesis is made as to whether some children may use aggression as a means of communication, since they cannot or will not express their views verbally. If adults encouraged children to express themselves verbally, *and* adults actively listen to them, children may be able to learn to deal with their feelings in socially appropriate ways, rather than resorting to aggression.

This chapter is concluded with the research questions for this work.

B. Background

I now teach in a special school for children identified as having EBSD for children aged 7 to 11 years. We have two classes, each having one teacher and one assistant. There are 7 children in my class. Two children are on the Autistic Spectrum, and are also diagnosed as having Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. There are no other serious medical problems for the other five children. When a child first experiences difficulties in mainstream school the school follows a set procedure, including seeking advice from professionals (mainstream staff, educational psychologists, paediatrician and so on). Carers are also consulted throughout the process. If, after planned support, the child continues to experience difficulties, those involved may draw up a statement of

Special Educational Needs (SEN). This statement may, with the consultation of professionals, carers, and (in theory) the child, identify a special school for the child.

Our special school's input usually starts when we receive the child's records, usually including the draft statement. We also meet the child with their carers. We then decide if the child would benefit from a placement with us. In effect, we have little choice of children. Our 'choice' is to admit the child into our school or not. In the vast majority of cases, we admit the child.

Presently, all of the children referred to our school are boys. Therefore, for the purposes of clarity, in this work I will use the masculine pronoun when referring to a child. Our situation of being a mixed sex school in theory, but single sex in practice is not unique, as identified by Cole *et al.* (1998), who also note that boys still outnumber girls in special schools for children identified as having EBSD, although the figures vary across the country. The reasons why boys outnumber girls identified as having EBSD are contentious, but not for the scope of this work.

Two of the boys in my group are of dual heritage. The DfES (2004a) state that the proportion of white children with statements for SEN was similar to those for black and mixed pupils, although the DfES (2005a) statistics show that mixed and black ethnic group children appear to be more likely to have a permanent or fixed term exclusion (% of school population; 0.25, 0.29 respectively), than those from a white background, (0.14 % of school population). We are a small school (14 children in total), and do not feel that this is an issue for us at present.

I moved from a mainstream to my present special school. In my mainstream school I found that the majority of children followed rules. Most wanted a positive relationship with me. Whilst some needed extra support from staff, for

instance, the giving of praise and small tokens, this was usually successful in ensuring order in the classroom. However, things were very different in the special school. Such strategies tended to have little or no effect. The children were not always welcoming to staff, or if they were, shortly afterwards they would threaten and swear. Some would be physically aggressive, needing 'physical interventions' (P.I.) (restraint) to avoid someone being hurt. I had little experience of these special needs and was keen to learn new strategies. The school had stated that training would be given for 'behaviour management' using 'Assertive Discipline' (Canter and Canter 2001). In theory, 'Assertive Discipline' appeared appropriate. Rules and rewards were to be made explicit, so children knew exactly which consequences would be given for specific behaviours. Following rules would lead to positive consequences; breaking rules would lead to negative ones. All staff had to be consistent in the giving of the set consequences.

As time progressed it became clear to me that there was a group of children who were not benefiting from 'Assertive Discipline'. For example, I would explain to a child exactly what they had to do to earn a reward in a short space of time (e.g. half an hour). The child would appear to understand and be happy with this 'behaviour management' strategy. Yet, within ten minutes he would apparently deliberately break the very rules he could earn his reward for. Such behaviours became common in certain individuals. When questioned about this, they offered few or no comments, appearing unable or unwilling to do so. These children seemed to be sabotaging the reward system that was meant to help them follow rules and hence receive an education. Since the children could/would not tell me why they acted as they did, I made my own hypotheses. It could have been that their self-esteem was so low, they felt they did not deserve a reward. It could also have been that they felt they had more 'control' if they didn't conform with adults. Whatever the reason, I saw that some children were being frequently denied rewards that other children had. This was probably damaging the relationship between child and teacher.

Furthermore, after receiving 'Assertive Discipline' training, I became concerned that the logical response from staff could be that it was the child's 'own fault' if he broke rules, since he had 'chosen' to do this, in the full awareness of the inevitable negative consequences that would follow. The teacher may feel that they had correctly carried out the 'behaviour management' strategies, and so the child must be to blame. In light of this, I saw a need to find a better practice for dealing with our children who display aggression.

Before I continue, I wish to consider the number of exclusions from schools in England. This is to give an indication of the frequency and type of behaviours that some children are displaying in our schools.

C. Number of exclusions from schools in England.

According to the DfES, (2005) over 51% of all exclusions were due to verbal abuse, threatening behaviour or physical assault (of pupil or adult), and, the number of permanent exclusions from primary school has reduced slightly over the last 3 years (2001/2 – 1,450; 2002/3 – 1,300; 2003/4 – 1,270). Whilst these figures are relatively small, there is concern that some groups of children are more likely to be excluded than others. The DfES write that boys represent around 80% of the total number of permanent exclusions each year. (This at least partly explains our 'single sex' school). In 2003/4 the fixed period exclusion rate for boys was around 3 times higher than that for girls. Also of concern is that boys are more likely to be excluded at a younger age than girls. Pupils with statements of SEN are almost 4 times as likely to be excluded than other children. Therefore, a younger boy with a statement of SEN, (as in my school), has a higher chance of being excluded (permanently or fixed term) than many other groups of children. These figures are worrying, particularly as there appears to be little improvement in recent years.

The next section considers the importance of the school environment in supporting children when they feel angry.

C.1.The importance of the school environment

If we take the view that children identified as having EBSD have ‘within child problems’, the role of the special school would be to make changes within the child. If the child is successful, i.e. the child’s behaviour changes, they will be able to return to mainstream school, and ‘fit in’ where they were unable to do so before. However, such a view, i.e. of children needing to change in order to ‘fit in’ with mainstream school, is much too simplistic. An alternative view is that environment also has an influence on how people behave. A child may use more socially accepted behaviours in one school but not another, and this could be not because the child has changed, but because the environment of the one school is possibly more conducive to children following instructions, co-operating and so on. Such a view could explain why some schools appear to be more successful in supporting children identified as having EBSD than others. OfSTED (2004) wrote how the proportion of children in special schools varied more than tenfold across Local Education Authorities, (LEAs). OfSTED note that this is at least partly due to the local commitment to supporting children with higher levels of need in mainstream schools. Such support would include ensuring that the child’s environment enhances desirable behaviours.

Dadds and Salmon (2003) discussed the interacting risks of temperament and learning in relation to anti-social behaviour. They claim that if a child is raised in relatively stable conditions, then new learning will be resistant to the effects of context. However, a child who is raised in a changing environment, will typically revert to original learning when the context is changed. Dadds and Salmon add that children at risk for anti-social behaviour, often have unstable environments, alongside ‘shifting parental behaviour’. Children may learn new behaviours in a special school environment, and comply with the rules.

Unfortunately, their newly learned behaviours may not transfer to a different environment, e.g. when and if they return to mainstream school. Moreover, according to Barnes *et. al.* (1984), a return to a previous environment, i.e. return to mainstream school, will probably bring a return of the previous behaviours. The environment of the school needs to be examined to ensure that it is conducive to supporting children in following rules, co-operating and so on. This view is supported by Wilkin *et. al.* (2005). They emphasise the importance of support strategies in *mainstream* schools being of most benefit when reintegrating an excluded child. This suggests that we need to ensure that the mainstream school is prepared to adapt its environment for the benefit of the child, rather than expecting the child to adapt to the school. The social model, where the child is viewed as responding to the situations they find themselves in is paramount, and is reflected in this research.

Whilst the inclusion of children with SEN in mainstream schools remains an aim, OfSTED (2004) recognise that this is the most difficult for those identified as having EBSD. Besides, although a child may be physically placed in a mainstream school there is some evidence that they are still not being fully 'included' in the life of their school, as outlined below.

C.2. Inclusion within mainstream school

Research has shown how children who are 'included' in a mainstream school may in effect be quite segregated. Fletcher-Campbell (2001) wrote how children who were excluded, or were in danger of being so, perceived that some teachers made them feel unwanted. Teachers may treat all children fairly and respectfully, but, according to Fletcher-Campbell, if a child *perceives* differently, they will respond in negative ways. Moreover, Allen (1999) found that the regime of a mainstream school can legitimise the exclusion of pupils with special needs by the actions of the mainstream pupils, e.g. mainstream pupils name calling to children with SEN. The victim viewed this as serious,

whereas the name caller did not. This demonstrates how people's beliefs etc. can vary significantly. Hence the importance of seeking individual viewpoints.

The following section deals with children who use aggression, and that this aggression could be their means of communication.

D. Aggression as a means of communication

Most, if not all of our children, were aggressive in their mainstream school. A child may use aggression as a means of communicating a variety of emotions, including anger, fear, and sadness. A child may be screaming out for help, but not know how to obtain it, other than inflicting pain on others. Hewett (1998) writes how children develop a repertoire of behaviours in conflict situations, and they are proficient in fulfilling their own needs;

She/he has developed good skills for these situations and rehearsed the use of them many times. This person may find these confrontations an interesting and fulfilling experience where she/he can indulge the conflict expertise developed. p73

These children may *appear* to enjoy causing mayhem, but they could be in severe distress, and not know how to express this or seek appropriate support. Clarke (2003) writes that there are times when a "highly aroused" person may act in an antisocial way;

"we 'see red' and our arousal reduces any attributions we may make, or inhibitions we may have, and so we act in a way that we will regret"
p90

Such regretful actions may well include aggression. In my experience, children identified as having EBSD become 'highly aroused' on a regular basis. If staff

could hypothesise on what was leading the child to such extreme behaviour, there could be a better chance of adults more appropriately supporting the child to deal with problems, feelings etc. in more socially appropriate ways. However, for this to occur, it is vital that adults not only know how to encourage children to express their views, but adults must also know how to 'listen' to them. Listening involves both listening to the child's words *and* listening to other, non-verbal communication, e.g. body language.

I now turn to the important area of children's views. This is followed by a section on adults listening to children.

E. The importance of children's views

Children should be encouraged to voice their opinions, e.g. on target setting for Individual Education Plans, (Jelly *et al.* 2000), and the choice of school placement for children with SEN, (DfES 2001a). Sinclair-Taylor (1995) notes that children with special needs often have difficulties in articulating their views, yet, as highlighted by Jelly *et. al.*, this should not be an excuse not to attempt to seek their views.

Educational research has also recognized the importance of listening to children's views. Interpretations of events and situations could be limited if we only consider what the adult *believes* about the children's views, (Lloyd-Smith and Dwyfor-Davies 1995, Garner 1995). Hence the shift away from research carried out *on* children to research *with* children.

When a child first attends our school they usually show reluctance to be with us. Some of our children say they don't want to be with us because we are a school for 'naughty boys', or we are the 'soft school', (i.e. a school for lower intelligence). Such comments suggest a lack of consultation with these children regarding their school placement.

With this in mind, have the children had their views sought in other areas of their school life? Did the children have the necessary skills to express themselves? If the children did give their views, were they listened to and/or responded to?

The following section emphasizes the importance of adults not only 'listening' to children, but also 'listening' to their behaviour.

F. Listening to children, 'listening' to behaviour

Whilst a competent adult may be able to listen to a child's spoken words, a child may communicate through aggression. It is difficult to 'listen' to a child who is screaming abuse, but unfortunately, these means of communication are not uncommon in our school. If an adult could 'listen' to the child's behaviour, they could be in a better position to give support. Greenhalgh (1994) wrote that sometimes we can infer what a child is feeling by examining the child's behaviour, both verbal and non-verbal. This information can then be used to make hypotheses about why the child is acting as such. The hypothesis would then inform how to best help the child. Although the risk of a wrong hypothesis could be detrimental, there are advantages if the child is 'understood'. Train (1993) believes that more severe behaviour is a reflection of more severe needs of the child. Staff must be sufficiently skilled to ensure they recognise and address this.

Having briefly considered the importance of listening to children, including listening to their actions alongside their words, I now turn to the need for successful intervention strategies.

G. The need for successful intervention strategies

The DfES (2004b) states how early intervention can prevent emerging problems from becoming SEN. Fitzsimmons (1998) claims that prevention and

intervention strategies are needed which include individual counselling, alongside commercially available resources for such children. However, if this is not in place early, i.e. before the age of 9, then it is unlikely to be successful. Sherr *et al.* (1999) believe that children who experience disorders should be treated, otherwise they will have “long term effects” p 5, i.e. increased risk of psychiatric disorder in adult life. They comment that this is possibly due to adverse environments that continue into adulthood. Social deprivation can have a detrimental effect upon children and their transition into adulthood. Schools have a duty to help overcome some of these ‘adverse environments’. The DfES (2004b) state that whilst compulsory parenting orders may be an option, such orders or parent contracts “should not be seen as alternatives to taking appropriate action to meet a child’s special educational needs”, 2.26, p42. One of the major influences on children in schools is undoubtedly its staff. This is considered below.

G.1. School intervention strategies

Staff in school can have a major impact upon children and their learning; in either negative or positive ways. This could explain why some schools appear more successful than others in supporting children with special needs in mainstream school, as cited above, (OfSTED 2004). Fletcher-Campbell (2001) wrote how excluded or disaffected children blamed teachers, yet this appeared not to be recognized by the teachers. Fletcher-Campbell writes that there was a lack of staff analysis as to why a ‘vulnerable’ child responded as they did. Therefore, there is a need for a whole school approach in addressing issues of inclusion

G.1.1. Staff turnover

The recruitment and retention of staff has been an issue in my school. This is worrying, particularly since OfSTED (2004), found that high staff turnover was a barrier to effective inclusion. Children no doubt benefit from a stable (and hence more consistent) team of staff.

In my school, high staff turnover could be at least partly due to the number of serious incidents (S.I.s) (see appendix 1 for definition of a 'serious incident') we were having. It seemed that staff and children were being assaulted on a weekly, and sometimes daily basis. Our staff (particularly new and inexperienced members) may not have had the confidence and/or competence to work with our children. Clearly this was an issue that needed a whole school approach.

If schools can encourage children to express themselves in more socially appropriate ways, *and* if staff are able to respond to the children's views, these children may respond in more appropriate ways when they feel angry. In terms of my school, firstly, I planned to encourage children to express their views about S.I.s they engaged in. Since the children would not necessarily have the prerequisite skills to do this I added the teaching of such skills into this research. Although the children's views are paramount, I also decided to add the views of staff and parents to help triangulate the data, and to add a wider perspective. This led to the following research questions.

H. Research questions

1. Can children be encouraged to express their views as an alternative outlet for aggression?
2. Can teachers use the views of children to help construct an environment that minimizes physical aggression?
3. What qualities and skills do staff need to successfully work with children identified with EBSD?

This work is not to condone or indeed to make moral comments upon the aggressive behaviours witnessed. It is to develop an understanding of the children's viewpoints through observations, discussions etc., with an emphasis on adults working with children to better support them when they feel angry.

I will now examine the related areas in the following literature review.

Chapter 2

Literature review

This chapter begins with a brief outline on the terms leading to ‘emotional, behavioural and social difficulties’. I then consider the social and emotional development of children, particularly in the area of ‘emotional literacy’.

Following this I consider how anger is a natural emotion, and that attempting to stop children from feeling anger could be doing them harm. The problem is not that people feel anger, but what they do with it.

The next section deals with the important area of different approaches to understanding aggressive behaviour; the main point being that we need to consider the ‘whole’ child and his ‘inner world’, rather than merely focus on his overt behaviours.

Following this is a consideration of the need to give children a ‘voice’ in schools. This can help them to shape their own environment. However, this can be problematic when we consider that there could be a link between aggressive behaviour and a lack in language skills. This has implications for schools; they need to explicitly teach and encourage children to express themselves to ensure that they are not creating environments that may be *causing* children to be aggressive.

I then discuss teachers’ views of aggression, and how they can vary, according to the individual. This leads to a need for staff development and awareness to ensure staff know how to help a child respond in non-aggressive ways. Finally, I briefly consider the inclusion of children identified as having EBSD in schools.

A. Definition of EBSD

Cole *et al.* (1998) give a history of the evolution of the terms that led to 'Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties', (EBD). This term has since been adapted, adding the word 'social'. The DfES (2001a) state young people who have these problems;

are withdrawn or isolated, disruptive and disturbing, hyperactive and lack concentration; those with immature social skills; and those presenting challenging behaviours arising from other complex social needs 7:60, p 87

This inclusion of the 'social' life of the child is a major step forward in recognising that it is not a straightforward case of a child having to 'change' his behaviour in order to 'fit in' with the environment. Hence, schools should consider their own ethos, attitudes and practices, when dealing with all children, including those with aggressive behaviours. Unfortunately, it appears that some teachers still view a child as having 'emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD)', paying less attention to the 'social' aspect of the child. O'Brien and Guiney (2001) write;

Sometimes teaching difficulties are manipulated and become identified as learning difficulties....In extreme cases, learners are blamed for learning difficulties and this dismisses the required debate about teaching. This also reinforces an attitude that the teacher need not discuss or reflect upon their own involvement in the teaching process because the learners hijack and destroy it. P20.

Hence, some teachers could be 'blaming' pupils for their learning difficulties, rather than examining how the environment can be adapted to support the pupil. Clearly adults must recognise the impact that the environment can have on a child's behaviour.

On a different issue, the addition of the term 'social' to the term 'EBD' has not been uniform. The multi-professional association 'Social, Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties Association' (SEBDA 2003) wished to emphasise that usually the 'social' and the 'emotional' create the behaviour, and so should be placed first, i.e. using the acronym SEBD. Whilst the DfES (2004 a and b) have adopted the acronym 'BESD', OfSTED (2004) use EBSD. For purposes of uniformity, the acronym EBSD is used in this work.

The definition of EBSD given by the DFES (2001a) above recognises that these children may have 'immature social skills'. Hence, these children may be viewed as having deficits in their social and emotional development. Moreover, their 'other complex social needs' (DfES 2001a) may be a hindrance to their development in this area, e.g. lack of appropriate role models. Schools need to address this, possibly by teaching the necessary skills to compensate for their 'immature social skills' *whilst* also attempting to address the 'complex social needs'. Before I continue further, there is a need now to examine children's social and emotional development, particularly the 'stages' of such development that children may pass through. In this way it may be possible to ascertain where problems may have arisen in some children's social and emotional development and/or how they may be helped to make further developments in this area.

B. Children's social and emotional development

Just as children's development varies in the areas of physical growth, academic progress, language and so on, the same is probably true for social and emotional development. Sharp (2001) notes how the general development of children has become well known over times, yet this development tends to refer to the 'common' milestones of walking, eating solids, the first word and so on. Sharp adds that there is little 'common' understanding of emotional and social development. According to Sharp, this could be because it is more difficult to

identify and measure such skills. Super and Harkness (1991) emphasise the important role of culture in learning emotional behaviours, and that such learning does not stop, but continues in adult life. Sharp acknowledges that personality can be viewed as ‘developing’, or perhaps, ‘evolving’ throughout our lives. However, if we accept the DfES (2001a) definition that children identified as having EBSD can have ‘immature social skills’ it will be necessary to examine which skills are lacking, and if there is a hierarchy of such skills to be learned. This is problematic since a child may show the ability to co-operate with others in a specific situation, but behave very differently at another time and/or in a different situation. This could be due to changes in the situation and/or changes in the child’s mood. It could also be due to the amount and type of support given by the adults around him. Clearly though, it would be advantageous if we could identify social and emotional developmental levels that children may pass through.

Sharp (2001) uses the term ‘emotional literacy’ to describe how people can express themselves, especially their emotions. He defines ‘emotional literacy’ as;

the ability to recognize, understand, handle and appropriately express emotions. Put more simply, it means using your emotions to help yourself and others succeed. p1.

Sharp has written a practical guide on how ‘emotional literacy’ (E.L.) can be ‘nurtured’, and warns that if we do not nurture emotional literacy then there is a risk of increased social exclusion. I now consider how the skills of the parents can have an affect upon the social and emotional development of children.

B.1. The skills of the parents

It is well known that effective parents interact with their children in ways that stimulate the child’s cognitive and emotional development. According to

Brophy (1996), this includes socializing children with the mores of their society. Brophy also writes that often parents attempt to socialize their own children in the same ways that they were socialized by their parents. One can see here how ineffective parenting could lead to the child growing up and becoming an ineffective parent themselves. This is in keeping with Sharp's (2001) view. He writes how 'emotionally illiterate' parents are more likely to have 'emotionally illiterate' children, who will go on to become 'emotionally illiterate' parents themselves. Such negative cycles need to be broken.

Haapasalo and Tremblay (1994) appear to show that poor parenting and family adversity may be a predictor of delinquency in physically aggressive boys. The work of Dadds and Salmon (2003) shares a similar view. Dadds and Salmon state how children at risk for anti-social behaviour have often received 'bad parenting'. Such 'bad parenting' includes unstable environments, and inconsistent parent behaviour. However, blaming parents for children's inappropriate behaviour is not and should not be an option for schools. The DfES (2004b) publication 'Removing Barriers to Achievement' emphasises the impact that schools can have on children's behaviour. Similarly, Greenhalgh (1994) cautions that teachers should not use a parent's difficulties as an excuse for not working positively with a child.

I now consider the development of 'emotional literacy' and its possible implications for how teachers respond to children who may have 'immature social skills' (DfES 2001a)

B.2. The development of 'emotional literacy'

Since children may have reached different levels of 'social development' it would be beneficial to consider a 'developmental path' that children may pass through. Sharp (2001) proposes a hierarchy of emotional literacy, which he links with Maslow's (1970) Hierarchy of Needs. Maslow writes that before any

development can take place, there are specific needs that must first be met, before any development can take place, and that these needs are hierarchical. The most basic needs are shown at the bottom of a triangle, (physiological), with further needs building upwards in the shape of a pyramid. Next are safety needs, then love and belonging, followed by self-esteem. Finally, there is the growth need of self-actualisation. According to Maslow, if a person can reach this level of the hierarchy then they are close to fulfilling their potential.

This is shown as a table, with progression being shown in an upwards direction.

Maslow’s hierarchy of Human Needs:	Level of Emotional Literacy (EL):
• Self-actualisation	>Extremely high EL, and recognised by others
• Self-esteem	> High EL, self-aware and motivated
• Social/affiliation/belonging	>Medium EL, development of empathy, caring and self-awareness
• Safety needs	>Low EL, preoccupation with forming attachments and being secure
• Physiological needs	>Base level of EL, centred on <i>fight or flight</i> response

Table 1. Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs and Sharp’s Hierarchy of Emotional Literacy. Taken from Sharp (2001) p14

Sharp views the development of ‘emotional literacy’ beginning with recognising and understanding emotions. This includes naming different emotions, and leads on to handling emotions more effectively.

Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs has implications in schools. In terms of EBSD, a child may not have reached the basic level of need, i.e. safety, and so may feel insecure in relationships with adults. The value of some programmes designed to promote pro-social behaviour will be limited if they incorrectly assume that

the child has the pre-requisite skills already met, and so concentrate on higher skills, e.g. self-esteem. According to Maslow, a child will not progress further up the pyramid until the lower stages have been met. Schools need to address this to help children become more 'emotionally literate'. Unfortunately, schools may be hindering such development by imposing behaviour management strategies that are inappropriate for some children. Behaviour management strategies tend to adopt an approach towards understanding aggressive behaviour and use this 'theory' to 'change' children's behaviours. This is an area of great significance in schools, and will be discussed in some detail. Before I do this, I examine the 'emotion' of anger. Anger is a natural emotion, and, as shall be seen, the solution is not to attempt to stop children from feeling angry; the concern is not that people become angry, but how they deal with their anger.

C. The emotion of anger.

This section starts with anger being discussed as a natural emotion with an important role in our lives. There is a danger that schools may perceive aggression as something to be suppressed, without offering an alternative outlet for such a strong emotion. Following this is the importance of recognising the stages of an aggressive incident. Such knowledge may help staff in preventing a minor incident into becoming an aggressive one.

C.1. The role of anger

Anger is an important emotion. It helps the individual protect themselves from a perceived danger. It may also help a person achieve a goal. It is what we do with our anger that makes it appropriate or inappropriate. Sage (2002) writes how adults teach children to deny strong feelings in order to be 'social', but they do not necessarily teach ways of coping with these strong feelings. Whilst anger may be inappropriately expressed as aggression, suppression of anger can

be just as harmful, as noted by Faupel *et al.* (1998). They stress that a child needs to learn necessary language and times to express their negative emotions in a healthy and positive way.

It is acknowledged that people can release their aggression in non-violent ways, e.g. punching a pillow or playing sports. However, Brophy (1996) suggests that allowing people to act out aggression, even in a non-violent way, is inappropriate. Brophy claims that this can lead to a chain of reactions ending with aggressive actions. This then reinforces itself every time the person engages in it. Brophy concludes;

The student is reinforced not only for expressing extreme anger harmlessly but also for building up extreme anger in the first place and for believing that this emotion requires or justifies aggressive behaviour. p177

This stresses the need to teach children appropriate alternative ways of dealing with and expressing emotions, particularly those of anger and frustration.

C.2. Physiology of aggression

Hewett (1998) notes how some people with challenging behaviours may have a very high level of 'arousal', on a frequent basis, with the accompanying release of adrenaline. Hewett writes how people can become aroused due to triggers, e.g. noise, thoughts, being goal blocked. The advantage of the release of chemicals during 'high arousal' is that they assist the 'fight' or 'flight' response, i.e. attack or run away. The disadvantage is that the chemicals also cause us to become unreasonable and irrational. Hewett warns that the higher a person's arousal, the more unreasonable and irrational a person will become. There is also a danger of a person enjoying the feelings of the release of adrenaline. Faupel *et al.* (1998) liken this to taking a drug, where there may be

short term 'nice' feelings, but tolerance levels change over time. Hence, the more angry a person becomes, the more likely they are to become angry again, with possibly stronger emotions. This makes it more difficult for the person to keep calm when they feel aroused. In these cases it is clear that these people need to be taught strategies to not only recognise what is happening to their bodies, but to know how to deal with this.

Just as a recognition of physiological changes in 'highly aroused' children is important, O'Brien and Guiney (2001) note that school staff must also recognise that they have adrenaline systems too. A teacher's rush of adrenaline during a S.I. in the classroom could have a detrimental effect on their response to the situation, i.e. the staff member may become 'unreasonable' and 'irrational', (Hewett 1998). Staff need to be aware that possessing the skills to respond to children who are aggressive may not be enough. They also need to know that their own strong emotions may have a detrimental influence upon their choice of response. Staff development must take this into consideration

Whilst children may engage in aggressive incidents, such incidents consist of different stages. This will now be discussed.

C.3. Stages of an aggressive incident

Myles and Simpson (1994) write how aggression does not occur without warning. They refer to Beck's (1985) four stages of behaviours that are present in an aggressive incident. Namely;

frustration stage
defensiveness stage
aggression stage
self control stage
(Beck 1985)

Myles and Simpson claim that a teacher should be sensitive to the early warning signs given by children before they become aggressive. This is because intervention at an early stage, even if only surface behaviours are addressed,

often prevents escalation of behaviour. They give examples of the type of behaviour that relates to each stage, and how teachers should react to this, adding that teachers should practise for a crisis, although it is unlikely that there will be a 'one size fits all'. The effectiveness in reducing aggression will depend upon the school staff having the ability to plan and apply appropriate interventions. Another problem is that it can take time to develop effective interventions. This will be exacerbated if there is a high staff turnover, where different staff may have different teaching styles, and different ways of supporting children's social and emotional development. (Furthermore, Brentro and Van Bockern 1994 note that teachers do not usually have a guiding theory, but instead use folk psychology, contradictions in methodology, incompatibility in team work and inconsistency). As mentioned above, the teacher's approach to understanding aggression will also be of significance. Strategies that do not consider the 'inner world' of the child could be harmful. Teachers must not only be aware of this, but also have the training to ensure they have the necessary skills and knowledge.

I turn now to the important area of different approaches to understanding aggressive behaviour.

D. Approaches to understanding aggressive behaviour

I will now discuss some approaches to understanding and responding to children's aggressive behaviour. Firstly, I give very brief details of the behavioural and cognitive-behavioural approaches. These are perhaps the simplest approaches to dealing with children's behaviour, and hence possibly the simplest models to put into practice. This is then followed by a discussion on the social constructivist approach, where attention is paid to how children actively construe social meanings from their environment, which then influences their behaviour. In this section I highlight the shortcomings of the behavioural and cognitive-behavioural approach, and how this can be addressed by adopting a social constructivist viewpoint.

Following this is a section on the psychodynamic approach, which seeks to understand the child's inner world. I then discuss how this approach can be of benefit in schools, particularly in understanding why children behave as they do, since their behaviour is, according to Greenhalgh (1994), 'psychologically logical'.

D.1. Behavioural

The American psychologist B. F. Skinner (1969) believed that behaviours are shaped by environmental stimuli. Skinner used the term 'operant conditioning'. This refers to when an operant response (e.g. putting hand up to speak) is followed by a reinforcing stimulus, (e.g. teacher praising child for putting hand up). The teacher's praise is likely to increase the probability of the response happening again. The behavioural model focuses on a person's overt behaviour. The reinforcing stimuli may be accidental, but the person will 'operate' according to his environment.

The behavioural model assumes that children will respond well to positive reinforcement (rewards), and avoid negative reinforcement (punishments). Assertive Discipline (Canter, L. and Petersen, K., 1995 and Canter and Canter, 2001) is rooted in this approach and has been successful in many schools. For many children, this behavioural approach addresses surface behaviours and encourages conformity. Unfortunately, the giving of punishments to children is not simplistic, and can result in children repeating the undesired behaviours. This is considered in the following section.

D.1.2. Punishment leading to reinforcement of original behaviour

Adults tend to use punishment in an attempt to change behaviour. Dadds and Salmon (2003) highlight the very complex nature of rewarding and punishing children. They claim that some children are 'punishment insensitive' (P.I.). Such children will not change their behaviour, no matter how hard the punishment. Indeed, the punishment may become a reward to the child, e.g.

receiving attention. In these cases, not only may the giving of punishments probably not be successful in changing behaviours, it may lead to reinforcement of the undesired behaviour. Clearly this has implications in the giving of punishments in schools. Dadds and Salmon conclude that children who are 'highly reward driven', but do not respond to punishments, would benefit from a close relationship. This will help to avoid inappropriate cycles of punishment, and help to teach the benefits of mutually caring, rewarding behaviour. Programmes that only address issues of surface behaviour ignore this.

Also of significance, Dadds and Salmon identify how a child may be punished for behaviours that were not deliberate, but brought on by a 'fear response'. This can be seen in schools, e.g. when a child is anxious about his work. The act of putting pencil to paper could risk humiliation, ridicule etc. Therefore, the child attempts to avoid the lesson through making noises, losing his pencil and so on. If this 'surface' behaviour is punished the child is unlikely to overcome the anxiety, it may even increase. Dadds and Salmon write;

Punishing the fear response will lead to stress reactions in the child that escalate the situation, and result in further child behaviors that are increasingly nonresponsive to punishment. p78

It is vital that schools are careful not to engage in punishments that are detrimental to children, particularly those identified as having EBSD.

I now consider the cognitive-behavioural approach, where the belief is that cognition is deficient and hence requires development.

D.2. Cognitive-behavioural

Bruner (1966) viewed learning as more than a passive response elicited from a stimuli which is then strengthened or weakened by reinforcement. People respond to the same stimuli in different ways. This suggests that cognitive

processes are being influenced. The cognitive model is often combined with the behavioural model to form the cognitive-behavioural model (Ayers *et.al.* 2000). The cognitive-behavioural model also uses rewards and sanctions in the same way as the behavioural model. In addition, the theory is that a child may be lacking the necessary cognitive skills needed to understand the reasons why rules must be followed. Hence, a child could break a rule, not because he chooses, but because of a lack of understanding. Therefore, the view is that these deficits in understanding need to be explicitly taught.

The cognitive-behavioural model also recognises that a person's state of mind may be 'improved' in order to influence behaviour. For example children are encouraged to give and receive compliments. A child should feel good when complimented. This may make them want to reciprocate, so making another feel good.

'Anger management' usually adopts the cognitive-behavioural model, teaching children alternative behaviour choices for dealing with their anger. When calm, children are usually able to theorise on how they *should* react to their feelings of anger i.e. use their cognitive processes. The cognitive perspective attempts to address this by explicitly linking thinking and reasoning with behaviour, e.g. Bernard (2001). Here children are taught to separate their feelings from the event and recognize that their feelings could be different, e.g. instead of thinking that they are 'stupid' because someone said so, they could think that they are not stupid and that it is the name caller who has a problem.

Unfortunately, some children tend not to be able to carry this out when they become angry, or, during 'high arousal' times (Hewett 1998). During these times the children experience the associated physiological processes, (e.g. adrenaline rush) and become 'unreasonable' and 'irrational', (Hewett 1998). Brohpy (1996) also recognized that aggressive children lack a repertoire of responses in different social situations, but Phtiaka (1997) writes that disruptive children had an inability to learn from previous mistakes. This could be due to

their 'high arousal' that may override their cognitive ability. In other words, they know how they should respond, but are unable to do so when in a highly emotional state. This suggests that merely teaching such skills may not be enough. We also need to consider how the child feels, what his viewpoint is. One way to do this would be to encourage the child to express his views. Regrettably, this is not always done. More regrettably, these two approaches, i.e. behavioural and cognitive-behavioural, whilst used in many schools, do not require the seeking of children's views. Instead, there is an emphasis on overt behaviours that are expected to change through the outward giving of preset rewards and negative consequences. The emotions of the child may not be considered, yet they could have a major affect upon his behaviour.

Whilst it is possible that many children are able to benefit from behavioural and cognitive-behavioural approaches, there are several who cannot. These several are no doubt the ones defined by DfES (2001a) 'with immature social skills'. Ironically, these are possibly the children such approaches are meant to benefit.

I now consider the social constructivist approach to understanding aggressive behaviour. This includes examining how the child makes sense of his environment. Since this includes examining the child's 'inner world' this will lead on to the psychodynamic perspective, and its value in schools.

D.3. Social constructivist

The behavioural and cognitive-behavioural models emphasise overt behaviours and the 'teaching' of new skills or knowledge to change behaviour. Social constructivists take a different outlook. They stress how individuals construct themselves and their environments, rather than focusing on biological or genetic influences. They view a person's behaviours as being the product of how a person 'constructs' his own view of reality, and that this construction depends upon the person's past experiences within the context of his culture.

Children do not behave in a 'vacuum', nor are they passive respondents to events. In other words, a person constructs his own knowledge and this influences his behaviour. Rose (1998) writes how social constructivists hold explicit or implicit propositions concerning knowledge. 'Knowledge' is seen as being determined by 'social processes'. Rose continues;

Knowledge is 'undetermined' by experience, so that the world must be understood in terms that are the product of culture. Hence these understandings are dependent not on the nature of reality or the empirical validity of the propositions, but on social processes. These processes are social and historically variable and thus so is what counts as knowledge. P49

A person's understanding of events, feelings and so on is dependent upon how the person constructs his reality, rather than on the actual events themselves, and so different people may construe the same event in different ways. With this in mind, our understanding of 'childhood' will vary across cultures. Developmental psychologists tend to concentrate on children as having 'lesser' abilities than adults, and that as they 'mature' and 'develop' they will become more able. In contrast, social constructivists do not view childhood as a 'natural' state. Instead, they view childhood as a social construct, and as such is defined by the belief systems of the particular society they are in. Indeed, the social environment is considered the most important factor.

Smith *et. al.* (2003) write that the social constructivist approach has

...more to do with how people define (childhood). People's attitudes towards childhood are influenced by the dominant belief system of the society in which they are located and so will vary across time and culture. P57.

This emphasises that childhood cannot be entirely separated from the social

environment they are in, and that ‘childhood’ varies across cultures.

In parallel with the cognitive-behavioural approach, social constructivists also recognise the value of instruction in learning. Vygotsky (1896-1934), a Russian psychologist, saw a reciprocal relationship between the individual person and the social context. He viewed the child as an active constructor of knowledge and understanding, and that the child acquires the ‘tools’ of thinking and learning through interactions with others more knowledgeable. As with cognitive-behaviourists, social constructivists recognise the value of a more able person instructing a less able, e.g. a teacher and pupil, but social constructivists also emphasise the relevance of a child’s social world in their learning.

Vygotsky (1978) noted the difference in ‘developmental level’ between what a child could do unassisted, and what could be done with a more able person. He called this the ‘Zone of Proximal Development’, or ZPD. This is discussed next.

D.3.1. Vygotsky’s (1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

Vygotsky acknowledged the importance of the environment in the development of children, stating that changes in the child take place in an “active adaptation to the external environment”. In educational terms, one can see how a teacher identifies a child’s ‘ZPD’ and uses this to inform the next stage of teaching. For instance, in a numeracy lesson, the teacher first models how to do multiplication, and then guides the child, gradually reducing the amount of assistance, until the child can do the task unaided. The concept of ZPD can also be related to the social and emotional development of children. Tharp and Gallimore (1988) note how more able peers can increase the attention span of peer span by giving reminders to concentrate. In other words, a more able child can support a less able child. Eventually, the less able child should be able to become competent. Similarly, adults could support a child who cannot deal

with strong negative emotions. This is to be discussed in the later section, 'Emotional holding' (Greenhalgh 1994).

Hence, social constructivists emphasise how children actively make sense of their environment through their understanding and past experiences. This approach can be put into great effect in schools. The teacher can be viewed as a facilitator of children's learning. This is done by the teacher actively seeking children's views in order to ensure misconceptions are cleared, and optimal learning takes place. Whilst the child is actively making sense of his environment, at the same time the teacher is attempting to actively make sense of the pupil's learning. Both teacher and pupil work together to construct a shared meaning of their environment. In this way, learning between pupil and teacher becomes reciprocal. This approach puts the child in the centre of the learning process, where the learning environment is determined by the needs of the child. It requires the child to express his views in order for the teacher to set the best learning environment. Moreover, the social constructivist approach, with its seeking of children's views, and giving them a 'voice', has added value, in that it can empower children to take control of their learning. This can be of great significance to some children, particularly those identified as having EBSD, since they tend to feel isolated and not included in school procedures or routines (Garner 1995). This is discussed in more depth later.

The psychodynamic approach also considers children's understanding of events and attempts to explain why people act as they do. If we are to examine the behaviour of a child, then it could be of benefit to take into account how *we* believe *he* is construing his environment. Such a view is not considered by the behavioural or cognitive-behavioural model, yet by doing so we may gain a better understanding of why children behave as they do. It may shed light on children's or adults' errors in understanding. This could lead to adults and children reaching a 'shared meaning' and so avoid future conflicts. I now discuss the psychodynamic approach and its value in schools.

D.4. Psychodynamic

The psychodynamic perspective sees maladaptive behaviour as originating in the unconscious functioning of the psyche. This perspective is complex. It considers the earliest experiences of the person and their unconscious drives e.g. ego defences. The theory of ego defence is commonly associated with Sigmund Freud (1856-1939). The ego is seen to use defence mechanisms when a person finds themselves in an 'unbearable' situation. The type of unbearable situation will vary according to an individual's biology and past experiences. Freud saw the influence of the social environment on the development of personality, particularly the conflicts between the child's instinct based drives and the demands of society. Furthermore, the unconscious mind largely determines behaviour. These conflicts are most significant during the first five years of life. Hence, the importance of these in the formation of personality.

Greenhalgh (1994) sees a child's responses to an environment as 'psychologically logical'. This is because a child will use their past experiences to inform their present actions. O'Brien (1998) recognised that children can and do model the behaviour of teachers. Teachers are poor role models if they shout wildly at a child who has been aggressive. The child may then come to understand that some forms of aggression, e.g. those who are bigger, or those who have power, are acceptable. O'Brien and Guiney (2001) note the importance of a good relationships between teacher and child. Then, if a child has experienced a trusting relationship, he will probably feel safe enough to engage in other experiences, and willing to take risks. Such risks may not necessarily be life endangering, but could be losing face if not successful in a lesson. O'Brien and Guiney write how a child may experience "existential terror" at the beginning of a lesson, not knowing what will happen next. If the child has not engaged in positive experiences, e.g. being successful in lessons, they could 'close in', rejecting the risks involved in learning. Hence the need for teachers to attempt to understand the meanings that their pupils apply to their world, including experiences during lessons. Teachers would then be in a

better position to support the child during ‘high arousal’ times. Greenhalgh (ibid) proposes that teachers need to hypothesise on *why* children act as they do. This must include teachers hypothesising on *how* children are making sense of their social environment. This may not be a serious issue for children who do not have ‘immature social skills’ (DfES 2001a).

Insofar as a child can express himself, the adult will then have more information to make more accurate hypotheses. I would argue that, if staff attempted to hypothesise on why a child acted as they did, *and* sought the views of the child, then staff would be in a better position to recognize any misperceptions that people may have. Such misperceptions could then be addressed, before the child engages in possibly damaging ‘psychologically logical’ (Greenhalgh ibid) behaviours.

The psychodynamic approach attempts to explain why children act as they do. The following section discusses some of these theories, and so gives an insight into the ‘inner world’ of some children, particularly those identified as having EBSD.

D.4.1. Projection and transference

This model is rooted in the psychodynamic perspective of emotional and behavioural difficulties. Greenhalgh (ibid) states that the process of projection and introjection takes place unconsciously in early childhood. Individuals may unconsciously ‘push out’ unwanted feelings onto another person. For example, a child feels angry because he cannot play football, will kick another boy. The other boy, i.e. the ‘projectee’ will then experience a painful feeling, just like the projector. The projector will then witness their pain through another person. According to Greenhalgh, this ‘projection’ is important for growth. The projectee will learn what another person may feel like, i.e. will develop empathy. Empathy is important in order to maintain relationships with others

around us. This 'pushing out' of feelings can bring a sense of release, but it is temporary. Another problem, as Greenhalgh notes, is that the use of projection does not make the projector more aware of the difficulty.

Greenhalgh (ibid) also claims that a child may not be able to 'hold' frightening feelings due to insecurity, fear, jealousy, low self-esteem and so on. At such a time a child may use projection as a defence mechanism, in order to affirm their true emotions. The child is unlikely to be able to discuss their emotions due to lack of vocabulary, lack of recognition of such feelings, not trusting someone to listen, and so on. So the child resorts to communicating/projecting these emotions by causing the recipient to feel the same emotional anguish as they do. Greenhalgh writes that adults can help the child by use of 'emotional holding'. (See below). The child is reacting to their feelings in an unconscious way. Moreover, Train's (1993) conception is that the severity of the child's behaviour is a reflection of the severity of the problems the child is experiencing. Perhaps this emphasises that the more a child projects their negative feelings, then the deeper the child's needs are.

Greenhalgh (ibid) claims that there is another form of projection called 'transference'. This is as above, but feelings from the past, or emotions about someone significant are unconsciously 'transferred' to another person. Weiss (2002a, 2002b) claims that teachers also unconsciously 'transfer' their emotions when dealing with children in school. This is known as 'countertransference'. Weiss writes of the importance of an examination of teachers' perspectives when dealing with children in their care. When a child 'transfers', it is as if the child is rehearsing what they could/should/would like to do with the identified significant person. However, as with projection, the child is acting in an anti-social way, and such behaviour is not going to be of benefit to the child. Transference can make the feeling easier to bear (because the feelings are shared), but this does not result in confronting a difficulty. It gives a false sense of security. Any comfort it can give to the child will depend upon the sensitive

responses of the adult. This demands that the adult is suitably trained to deal with children who display these behaviours.

A child who displays severe behaviour, e.g. frequent aggression, is unlikely to benefit from behavioural or cognitive-behavioural programmes, until his 'inner world' is better understood and addressed. In other words, we need to hypothesise on why he acts as he does and use this information to support him. Greenhalgh notes that adults can use children's projections or transference as a means of understanding how the child is feeling. He writes;

It (projection) can be a very significant tool in helping to understand what is happening when difficult feelings are aroused in ourselves, and to make *hypotheses* about what might be affectively happening for the child. p55 (Greenhalgh's emphasis)

Greenhalgh stresses the importance of the adult regarding 'acting out (see below)/projecting' as a form of communication. Children, particularly those whom Greenhalgh calls 'troubled or troubling', cannot verbalise their emotions easily. Therefore they may resort to behaviours in the belief that 'actions speak louder than words'. It could be argued that adults need to 'read' the situation to hypothesise why the child is acting in such a way. A child who is acting out may benefit from being treated differently from a child who is 'projecting', and so has implications for staff training.

D.4.2. 'Acting out' through fear of rejection

Greenhalgh (1994) writes that "acting out is different from willful naughtiness" p49. When 'acting out' the child is resisting any positive adult intervention. In turn, this may result in a delay in the child's emotional development. To this child's perspective, this is a preferable risk to being eventually rejected by this adult. Brendtro and Van Bockern (1994) write that many troubled children will initially provoke a well meaning adult to see if they become hostile. Even if the adult does not return the hostility, the child may believe that this response is

merely temporary, and that the adult will eventually become hostile to the child, so confirming the child's original belief. Staff in schools must not fall into the trap of projecting the child's negative emotions back to the child, i.e.

'countertransference', as defined by Weiss (2002a, 2002b). An important point to be made is that in these cases, e.g. a child 'acts out' or 'projects/transfers' his negative emotions onto a teacher, the adoption of behavioural or cognitive-behavioural approaches could do more damage than harm. When a child receives the inevitable sanctions this will probably serve to reinforce his feelings of rejection from the teacher.

I now turn to the possible inner turmoil that some children, particularly those identified as having EBSD probably experience at some time. Greenhalgh (ibid.) has written how adults can support children through such difficult times through 'emotional holding'. I liken this with Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development, discussed earlier, and continued below.

D.4.3. Emotional holding (Greenhalgh 1994)

There has been some literature that has attempted to explain the inner turmoil that troubled or troubling children experience, (e.g. Train 1993). Greenhalgh (ibid.) has written about 'emotional holding'. This is where the adult shares the frightening feelings of the child, and by doing so, demonstrates that they can be endured without resorting to physical violence. A child may seek this by 'acting out' or 'projection', (see earlier). They cannot or will not verbalise their strong and frightening feelings. According to Greenhalgh, the adult needs to acknowledge how the child must be feeling, and empathise openly. The adult demonstrates to the child that such negative feelings can not only be endured without hurting others, but can also be shared. Then the child will be more open to consider alternative behaviours. The concept of 'emotional holding' can be likened to Vygotsky's (1978) view of supporting a child through the 'Zone of Proximal Development'. In these instances, i.e. when the adult holds the strong

negative emotions for the child, the adult is also assisting the child in his 'emotional' ZPD, until the child is able to 'hold' the feelings himself. If the model of linking 'emotional holding' to the ZPD is adopted, it is important to note the fourth stage of the ZPD. Here the child may revert, as if he has 'lost' a previously acquired skill. The child will again need support from a more competent person, until he is able to perform unassisted. A child's behaviour may regress, particularly if under stress or in a different environment, as written by Barnes *et. al.* (1984). This must be considered when returning a child back to mainstream school. Hence we should offer appropriate support for the child's 'inner turmoil' *and* environment.

D.4.3.1. The 'psychodynamic psychoeducational' approach

Brendtro and Van Bockern (1994) suggest a 'psychodynamic psychoeducational' approach. This considers resolving the inner conflicts that 'troubled' children have. It blends multiple strategies for intervention, particularly addressing the unmet developmental needs that, according to Brendtro and Van Bockern, drive most problem behaviour. This is in accordance with Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Brendtro and Van Bockern state that adults must nurture belonging, mastery, independence and generosity. If a child does not have these needs met, they will not learn independence, will feel like a helpless pawn, will be easily misled, or seek pseudo-power by bullying or defiance. Brendtro and Van Bockern emphasise that the whole ethos of the school must reflect the principles involved, e.g. ensuring all children are treated with respect at all times. Therefore, there is a need for a whole school approach to dealing with children's social and emotional needs. However, both the 'psychodynamic' approach, and the 'psychodynamic psychoeducational' approach do not emphasise children's views, or ways of encouraging children to give their voice. This is an area for careful consideration.

Whilst the relationship between carers and children is of major significance, Brendtro and Van Brokern (1994) state that the relationship between the child

and teacher is vital. They write that building successful relationships takes time and effort. Cole *et al.* (1998) note that staff can use a psychodynamic approach with children who have emotional and behavioural difficulties, but to be effective this has to be based on good relationships. The difficulty here is what constitutes a 'good relationship'? Also, it is more difficult for a teacher to have a 'good relationship' with a child when there are up to thirty children in a class. It is even more difficult to have a 'good relationship' with a child who is identified as having EBSD. Teachers must be competent and confident when working with these children.

Thus far, I have discussed children's social and emotional development, and some approaches to understanding aggressive behaviours. My conclusion is that we need to consider the 'whole' child and his 'inner world'. In order to do this, it would be beneficial if children could assist the adults in promoting an environment conducive to supporting strong emotions. In other words, children could be encouraged to express their own views, particularly in relation to their schooling, and suggest what could be done to encourage them to choose more appropriate behaviours when 'highly aroused'. If teachers are to adopt this approach there is the issue of staff training. Garner (1995) found that 'disruptive' secondary school boys preferred teachers who were 'willing to negotiate and listen to another side of the story', but these boys claimed that teachers did not do this. Without adequate knowledge and skills relevant to working with children who are identified as having EBSD, a teacher could make matters worse, possibly making the children feel more isolated. Worryingly, OfSTED (2004) note that SENCOs did not have experience of behaviour difficulties. Another difficulty is the practicality of listening to children's views when a teacher has a large class and a busy timetable. However, a starting point could be to examine mainstream teachers' views of their present skills and their Continuing Professional Development (CPD) needs in this area (Smith 2003).

In spite of the difficulties, giving children a 'voice' can bring great benefits, as discussed in the following section.

E. Giving children a 'voice'

This section starts with a discussion on the link between language and behaviour. This is followed by a consideration of the importance of schools listening to children's views.

E.1. Link between language and behaviour

There are rough guides for language development at certain age ranges. Some children will develop more quickly than others, depending upon the child and the environment. It has been noted by Sage (2002) that pupils with emotional and psychiatric difficulties commonly have impairments in narrative language. This prevents them from negotiating themselves out of their 'troubles'. One can see here how there could be a link between a lack of communication skills and aggression. The less one can communicate using verbal language, the higher the chance the person resorting to physical 'language'. Sage writes in her article '*Start talking and stop misbehaving*', how adults teach children to deny their strong feelings e.g. anger and frustrations, in order to help them to socialise. "Thus, we fail to learn how to communicate what we really feel, think and mean" p87. Schools may be in danger of addressing the overt, physical 'language' without providing an alternative, i.e. verbal language. A child may stop or reduce his aggression, but consequently suffer a build up of strong emotion, with no outlet. This could be more damaging than the original aggression, (Faupel *et al.* 1998). According to Sage, we must teach pupils to communicate in appropriate ways, and that doing so will help them to think and act appropriately. In a similar vein, whilst children may lack the necessary skills to express themselves, they may also misinterpret social cues (Fitzsimmons 1998).

Fitzsimmons writes that aggressive students are likely to misinterpret social cues and that this can lead to faults in social information processing. This is more marked if the child is stressed, e.g. during lessons. One may infer from this that these children may benefit from being taught ways of correctly processing social information. However, as stated earlier, it could be argued that the child has to have some level of development/skill (as identified by Maslow 1970 and Sharp 2001), before benefiting from such a programme. A child who lacks such skills may need to 'catch up', but this model may be rather simplistic. The development of language alone is probably insufficient. Phtiaka (1997) found that pupils who caused disruption in class failed to recognise a teacher's growing impatience and anger, i.e. as noted by Fitzsimmons, they misinterpreted the teachers' social cues. They could or would not respond to the teacher's non-verbal communication. Phtiaka's noted how such children had an inability to learn from previous mistakes. She writes;

These pupils had been involved in so much trouble that one would expect them to have developed a method of seeing it coming, even if they were not initially equipped with one... given their experience they might at least be expected to have developed a sophisticated technique of dealing with trouble when it was already there. *None of these occurred.* P111 (my italics)

Could it be that these children were unable to 'negotiate themselves out of their troubles' due to deficits in their language? (Sage 2002), and/or misinterpreted the social cues? If this is the case, then there is a need to teach the necessary skills of communication, including vocabulary, facial expression, body language and so on, to ensure that children can talk their way out of troubles rather than resort to aggression. Sharp (2001) emphasises the importance of '*first having an extensive feelings vocabulary*' p45, (my italics), before people can learn 'to recognize, understand, handle, and appropriately express emotions'. Clearly, there is more to communication than merely vocabulary.

Whilst children may benefit from being explicitly taught how to express themselves, this will not be of much use if schools did not listen when the children spoke. There are also other benefits from listening to children, as discussed below.

E.2. Importance of school listening to children's views

Lloyd-Smith and Dwyfor-Davies (1995) show concern that children's perceptions are rarely sought. They write;

There is an important role for empirical research in providing the means for children to reflect on their educational experience and provide insights for policy makers and practitioners into the adequacy and effectiveness of provision. p11

Seeking the views of children, particularly younger ones, is difficult, but this could be of great benefit, including those identified as having EBSD. Such children tend to feel marginalised and dis-empowered. Garner (1995) found that boys identified as having EBSD believed that rules were 'just there', and felt that they were unable to change things. They felt isolated, not included in school procedures or routines. A first step to make these boys feel re-included could be to seek their views, to give them a 'voice' in their school. Lloyd-Smith and Dwyfor-Davies (*ibid*) note that such children's observations may not be accurate, but seeking these views is fundamental to a school's effectiveness. This is because children's perceptions can inform their attitudes and hence determine behaviour. If the children have a more positive attitude, then they are more likely to engage in more positive behaviour.

The experience of having one's views listened to can boost self-esteem, and children identified as having EBSD tend to lack self-esteem. Jelly *et al.* (2000), write that children who feel that they have little control over their own lives have an enormous boost to their self-esteem by simply having their views

valued by an adult or peer. (This is in accordance with Lloyd-Smith and Dwyfor-Davies (1995), written above). In turn, this can make a positive contribution to pupils' capacities to learn effectively. Jelly *et al.* discuss a 'continuum of participation'. A positive cycle develops, where increasing levels of involvement are expected to lead to greater empowerment of the children. Such empowerment is vital for children who feel isolated and not a part of the school.

Whilst Lloyd-Smith and Dwyfor-Davies (*ibid.*) wrote that children should have an opportunity to reflect upon their educational experience, it is also vital that teachers do the same. It is only by reflecting and hypothesising on why events occurred as they did will they be in a position to change children's behaviours. Seeking the views of children will encourage teachers to become reflective practitioners; a necessary skill when teaching children.

When pupils' perceptions are sought the results can be multifaceted. For instance, Garner (1995) found that secondary aged 'disruptive' boys were more concerned about the actions of the teachers rather than the curriculum. This suggests that schools may be able to reduce aggression or disaffection, not necessarily by examining the lesson content, but by examining pupil-staff relationships. Whilst Jelly *et al.* wrote that children can increase their self-esteem, and hence become more successful learners by being listened to, Garner claims that the very act of seeking the pupils' perceptions of those termed 'disruptive', could reduce any threat teachers may feel by such pupils. Such a reduction in this threat could help to develop relationships between staff and pupils. Hence, listening to pupils can bring at least two benefits, 1) it can increase self-esteem and 2) reduce any perceived threats between teachers and pupils. Garner does warn against over analysing pupil comments since scrutiny detracts from the power of pupil comment. However, he concludes that listening to the views of these children can give them status, provide

opportunities for them to participate more positively in school life, and so re-include them back into the mainstream society.

Evans *et al.* (2004) also noted that consulting and listening to children had an important role to play. This was particularly important for ensuring the acceptability of a particular strategy used to support children with emotional and/or behaviour difficulties. They also highlighted the difference between the children's definition of a successful strategy with those of teachers or researchers. Evans *et al.* conclude that practitioners and researchers should work in partnership to carry out research into the effectiveness of strategies used to support children with emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. They continue;

Children should be respected and valued in the same way as any other social group participating in research. Their views and experiences should be considered as a valuable resource for the development of interventions. P8 (Evans et. al. italics).

The above citations refer to older children. Can younger children benefit from giving their perceptions? Younger children, due to their immaturity, will be lacking in skills of communication, including a more limited vocabulary. Piaget's (1969) model of cognitive development shows that young children are egocentric and so find it difficult to see another's point of view. This means that they may only be able to express themselves in terms of themselves and not in relation to another's possible different viewpoint, yet it has been shown that children are able to perform at higher levels *if* the situations are put into a meaningful context for the child (Donaldson 1978). Similarly, Scott (2000) states that children from the age of 7 are able to use individual and group semi-structured interviews, provided that the questions are meaningful to their lives. Hence, if young children's perceptions are to be sought, this must be done in a meaningful context for the child.

Lewis (2004) cautions against seeking *only* the views of children. She writes how children's views may be sought to assuage the guilt felt by adults when they neglect children by not taking them seriously. Instead, Lewis proposes that all people's views matter. This would mean considering the views of children *and* staff in schools.

Having considered how schools need to listen to the views of children, and the benefits this can bring, I now turn to the possibility that some schools are not encouraging children to use more appropriate behaviours, and may be actually causing children to choose aggressive responses.

E.2.1. Possibility of mainstream schools causing aggression

Most children cope extremely well in mainstream schools. Of those who do not, schools may have contributed towards the child's aggression. O'Brien and Guiney (2001) emphasise how teacher questioning in lessons can make a child feel lower or higher self-esteem. Whilst teachers tend to differentiate their lessons according to the academic ability of the individuals, O'Brien and Guiney have written on how teachers must differentiate *emotionally*. An example they give of 'emotional differentiation' is of a teacher making a mental note not to be drawn into confrontations with an abusive child. The fact that some schools appear to be better at supporting children identified as having EBSD than others, (Watkins 2003), could be due to the skills and knowledge of the staff in protecting, and even increasing children's self-esteem.

Teacher attitude towards children can also be significant. Garner (1995) found that 'disruptive' boys stated how a teacher's technique/teaching style, disposition, control and fairness had an affect upon them. Booth *et al.* (1992) noted that there are 'bad' teachers who create problems for children, sometimes forcing children to act in an aggressive way. Booth *et al.* continue this, stating

that such teachers are unwilling to address the possibility that they themselves have contributed to a child's aggressive response.

Watkins (2003) writes how different schools make 'different differences' when dealing with behaviour. He writes;

Key staff in different schools vary in the extent to which they believe the problem of disruptive behaviour to be within the power of schools to resolve. These beliefs are crucial for they inform the action and can become self-perpetuating.....So when explaining difficult behaviour, we cannot leave the school out of the picture. P9

This highlights the need for whole school approaches and staff training in supporting children's behaviour.

The next section considers how teachers' views of aggression are subjective and have an impact on how they respond to aggressive behaviour. The conclusion is that staff must be trained to ensure that they are supporting children who are identified as having EBSD, rather than possibly leading children to become more aggressive.

F. Teachers' views of aggression

Merrett and Taylor (1994) found that in their study of nursery children, that their teachers complained the most about aggression. Merrett and Taylor claim that this is possibly because younger children will be more likely to respond in action rather than words. Younger children aged 2-3 years tend to have 'temper tantrums' where they use physical aggression. This is not of major significance. However, this is not as acceptable if the child is aged 9 years, and even less so at age 12 years. Whilst physical aggression may not be a frequent misbehaviour, when it does occur it is of more significance, especially if the child causes major harm. Schools and society cannot tolerate people being hurt. A little caution must be taken with the research carried out by Merrett and

Taylor. Teachers' views of aggressive acts are, up to a point, subjective. For instance, if a child who previously hit someone when frustrated, but now shouts instead is showing less aggression. This may be recognised by one teacher as aggressive, but not so by another.

According to Watkins (2003), there is no evidence to show that pupil behaviour is getting worse – or better. However, Watkin's acknowledges that teachers may have a different view, and that such views are "worthy of concern".

O'Brien (1998) discusses how teachers' own views on behaviour and learning will determine their responses to a child. This relates to Weiss' (2002a, 2002b) belief that a teacher's life experiences as a child has an affect upon their responses to children. Different teachers were asked what should be done when a boy of almost 4 years screamed and spat when he was left in kindergarten. A teacher who was spanked as a child favoured removing the boy's favourite toy. A teacher who was an orphan blamed the mother, saying he should be with his mother and not in kindergarten. A single parent teacher (who needed to work to support her family) said the boy should be left to 'stew by himself'. Therefore, according to Weiss, a teacher's personal subjective experience will have an effect upon the professional decisions they make about children.

According to O'Brien, if a teacher views a child's behaviour as personal and internal, then the difficulty is viewed as being locked within the child, and nothing can change it, i.e. the medical model. O'Brien writes how teachers should be aware of aggression as situational, and teachers should analyse what is causing or maintaining the aggression in the classroom. This can be likened to viewing the child's behaviour, e.g. aggression, as a means of communication that the adult must 'listen' to.

The next section considers the importance of staff development when working with children who are identified as having EBSD, and the need of the staff to have self-awareness.

F.1. Staff development and staff awareness

Weiss (2002b) writes how teachers become ‘transference objects’, where children transfer their negative feelings from the past onto a teacher. (This was discussed earlier in the ‘psychodynamic approach’ to understanding behaviour.). If teachers are ‘transference objects’, then they could respond, according to Weiss, with ‘countertransference’, i.e. transfer the emotions back. Here the teacher uses a ‘personal subjective involvement’ when making professional decisions about children, but are largely unaware of how their reactions could influence children’s behaviour. In the case where a child has his needs met, and experiences positive relationships at home, it is likely the child will develop a positive transference to his teachers. In such cases, the issues of ‘transference’ and ‘countertransference’ are not of such great concern since there is less likely to be clashes since those involved have positive expectations of themselves and others’ behaviours. The difficulty is when a child gives a ‘negative transference’, e.g. is hostile or fearful. In these situations the teacher needs to avoid giving a negative ‘countertransference’. Instead, the teacher must be careful to respond in positive ways. Weiss emphasises how there must be staff development in this area, to ensure that teachers recognise when they are ‘countertransferring’ in negative ways. This is in keeping with Sharp’s (2001) concept of ‘Emotional Literacy’, i.e. a person should be able to recognise and deal with their own emotions and so will then be in a better position to appropriately support children’s strong emotions. If a teacher is unable to acknowledge their own feelings, then it will probably be very difficult for them to support children with a similar low self-awareness and/or emotional literacy.

Sage (2002) promotes teachers engaging in discussions with children that actively pursue a ‘shared meaning’, which, according to Sproson (1992) ‘bad’

teachers do not do. Arriving at 'shared meanings' would help all concerned to see the others' viewpoint. Weiss claims that good teachers put effort into reflecting on their teaching and attempt to change their own behaviour. It is vital that teachers are reflective practitioners, otherwise there is a possibility of a teacher using the same unsuccessful strategies that will possibly lead to a child becoming aggressive. If a teacher reflects on why a child acted as such, and hypothesises on what could support the child to avoid similar behaviours, there is more chance of the child changing his behaviours. In accordance with O'Brien and Guiney (2001) it is also clear that teachers need to consider not just what and how they teach, but the emotions of all concerned in the classroom.

Whilst the issues above highlight the importance of staff training, OfSTED (2004) note that Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators, (SENCOs), identified the perceptions of staff as major barriers to effective inclusion. OfSTED also raised concern that whilst SENCOs had experience of learning difficulties, they did not have experience of behaviour difficulties. Assuming that teachers, particularly those in mainstream school do not have the necessary skills to teach children identified as having EBSD, this raises the need to examine INSET and initial teacher training programmes. Unfortunately, Smith (2003) found that teachers and educational support staff complained that support and training for classroom management is hard to find. Moreover, Smith adds that behaviour management is barely touched upon in initial teacher training, nor is it adequately addressed in INSET programmes. Watkins (2003) notes that this is in contrast to other training courses, e.g. preparation for OfSTED and target setting. The DfES (2004b) state that they are attempting to address this in regards to initial teacher training through the New Standards for Qualified Teacher Status, and new Induction Standards for Qualified Teachers. This is a step in the right direction.

Thus far I have discussed different approaches and responses to anger. I have also considered how a teacher may, albeit inadvertently, make it more difficult for children to avoid aggressive behaviour by the teacher responding with possibly damaging ‘countertransference’. Hence the need for teachers to receive training in this area. Unfortunately, there appears to be a lack of such training available.

I now consider how special schools may offer a ‘safer environment’ (Preece and Timmins 2004), that is so important to some children, either for short or long term.

G. The inclusion of children identified as having EBSD

There are disadvantages to children attending special schools, e.g. labeling and marginalisation. It has long been recognised that labeling children can lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy (Rosenthal and Jacobson 1968). When a child is placed in a special school, (or even before), they immediately acquire a label, e.g. ‘EBSD’. Sinclair-Taylor (1995) writes that labeling leads to stereotyping and marginalisation. As time passes, a negative cycle can develop, making it more difficult not only for the child to change their behaviours, but for staff in schools to change their behaviour towards the child. However, there can also be advantages to attending a special school or unit. Sinclair-Taylor (1995) sought the views of children in a ‘special unit’ in a comprehensive school. Here, even with the associated detrimental labels, the pupils described the unit as a safe place, where needs could be met whilst they also received an education. This may not be achieved if they attended a mainstream school only. Preece and Timmins’ (2004) also refer to a special school as having a ‘safer environment’ when compared with mainstream school. The main point to consider is the importance of these children receiving an education. Receiving a good education will help a child reach their potential and increase their life choices, as recognized by The Rt. Hon. Charles Clarke in DfES (2004b). The importance of early interventions has also been recognised by the DfES (2003)

in its publication of '*Every Child Matters*' and Sure Start Programmes. It is vital that these early interventions are effective *and* appropriate.

H. Summary

This chapter began with a short definition of EBSD, which was then followed by a consideration of children's social and emotional development. It was claimed that children who are identified as having EBSD probably have 'immature social skills' and 'other complex social needs'. (DfES 2001a). This reflects a shift from the belief that the child must change to fit the environment to a recognition that it is the environment that must change to support the child. Hence, schools must examine their own environment, and hence practices, to ensure they are best serving their children's needs.

The next section dealt with the emotion of anger, and its role in our lives. Whilst it is a natural emotion, the physiological changes it makes in our bodies can make us 'unreasonable' and 'irrational' (Hewett 1998). This is important to bear in mind both for the angry child *and* the teacher who is experiencing the child's anger. Teachers have adrenaline systems too; this could have a detrimental affect upon the teacher's response to the child. Hence the need for teachers to reflect upon their own responses to children, and recognise that their response may help or hinder a child

Attention was then paid to social and emotional development. Sharp's (2001) combination of his hierarchy of 'emotional literacy' with Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs showed how some children may not have achieved the more basic needs. If this is not addressed in school, then not only may some children not progress as they should, but they could be harmed. O'Brien and Guiney (2001) write how schools must differentiate 'emotionally', suggesting that teachers have a role to play in avoiding drawing children into abusive behaviours. This highlights how children are not all at the same level of social and emotional development, and this must be taken into account by schools. In particular,

children identified as having EBSD tend to have 'immature social skills' (DfES 2001a), and so are probably in greater need of 'emotional differentiation'. Such 'emotional differentiation' could start with teachers attempting to understand why a child acts as he does.

The next point I considered was the different approaches to understanding aggressive behaviour. It became clear that those approaches which did not consider the 'whole' child and his 'inner' needs (i.e. the behavioural and the cognitive-behavioural) were not only of limited value, but could also cause damage. Nevertheless, some programmes designed to change behaviour rely on these approaches. This may not be of major concern for the majority of children, but can be harmful for children identified as having EBSD, i.e. those with 'immature social skills'. Instead, schools need to examine how children make sense of their environment (social constructivist), and use this to ensure that optimum learning can take place. Whilst the child is actively making sense of his environment, the teacher is attempting to actively make sense of the pupil's learning. Hence, learning between pupil and teacher becomes reciprocal.

In addition to the social constructivist approach, I also considered the psychodynamic approach. Here, the adult actively seeks reasons for why children act as they do. Greenhalgh (1994) uses the term 'psychologically logical' for children's responses. The teacher needs to consider how a child is making sense of his environment, and then attempt to understand the child's actions from the child's point of view. This can lead to teacher and pupil reaching a 'shared meaning', with less chance of them experiencing misconceptions or misunderstandings that can add to children's difficulties. Children could be encouraged to explain their reasoning *and* suggest ways that adults could help them to deal with their strong emotions. Whilst Greenhalgh tells us that staff should hypothesise on why a child acts as he does, I would take this further. If staff can also 'listen' to the child, including his behaviours,

and the child could express his views/feelings, staff would be in an even better position to give support.

One difficulty though is the lack of teacher training in the area of EBSD, and a lack of skills and knowledge could be harmful, e.g. the adult could wrongly hypothesise why a child acts as he does, with the possible consequence of a teacher giving inappropriate support to a child. This raises issues of staff training, but training for classroom management appears to be limited (Watkins 2003). It could be beneficial to examine mainstream teachers' views of their present skills and their CPD needs in this area (Smith 2003).

Both the social constructivist and psychodynamic approach legitimate the giving of a 'voice' to children. Encouraging children to express their views can go further than adults and children reaching 'shared meanings', with a view to helping adults to better understand them. It can also empower children to take some control over their environment. This is of great significance, since children identified as having EBSD tend to feel isolated, unable to change things and not included in school procedures or routines (Garner 1995). Another advantage of seeking children's views is that the mere process of doing so can increase self-esteem (Jelly *et al.* 2000). Conversely, not seeking children's views may lead to children feeling more isolated, and not included in school procedures or routines (Garner 1995). The process of actively including *all* children can be started when their views are sought.

Whilst I highlighted the need for schools to listen to the views of children, I also examined the link between language and behaviour. It seems that some children with emotional difficulties lack skills of communication. Sage (2002) suggests that the teaching of communication skills, including body language, will benefit children who cannot 'negotiate themselves out of their troubles'. Some children also have difficulties interpreting social cues (Fitzsimmons 1998). Nevertheless, it appears that some schools are expecting children to deny

their strong emotions (Sage 2002), and are not recognizing the need to teach alternative ways of expressing strong emotion, e.g. talking. This suggests that schools should explicitly teach these skills to ensure that children can talk their way out of troubles rather than resort to aggression.

Likewise, teachers need to examine themselves and their school since some may be actually causing some children to be aggressive. The reasons may be quite obvious, e.g. ‘bad’ teachers (Booth *et. al.* 1992), or less obvious, such as inappropriate questioning by the teacher, (O’Brien and Guiney 2001). From this I conclude that teachers need necessary training to ensure they are not responding in ways that can be harmful to the child.

Finally, in this chapter I emphasized the importance of effective and appropriate early interventions to ensure all children reach their potential and increase their life choices, and this has received recognition, e.g. in the publication of ‘Every Child Matters’ (DfES 2003).

With the issues from this literature review, I now refer back to my research questions. The original three questions remain the same, but I have added research question number four to reflect the need to examine mainstream teachers’ views.

1. Can children be encouraged to express their views as an alternative outlet for aggression?
2. Can teachers use the views of children to help construct an environment that minimizes physical aggression?
3. What qualities and skills do staff need to successfully work with children identified with EBSD?
4. How skilled do mainstream teachers feel to include children with EBSD in their classroom?

With these research questions in mind, I now turn to the methodology chapter.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

A. Introduction

Stenhouse (1975) argues that teachers should carry out research, writing that their subjective perceptions are crucial for practice, since the teacher is 'in a position to control the classroom'. According to Stenhouse, this is preferable to 'clinically objective research', through an 'interested actor'. Rose (2002) also claims that teachers are more likely to become involved in classroom based inquiry when they perceive the benefits this brings to their own practice, and to the needs of their pupils. However, this also means that I am likely to have preconceptions about the answers to the research questions, which may lead to biased research and subsequent findings. It is difficult, if not impossible to be wholly objective, especially since I work with the staff and children on a day to day basis. I am very much a part of the environment studied. Whilst Blaxter *et. al.* (1996) write that it would be foolish to attempt to be 'wholly objective', but it must be kept in mind.

Positivist research follows the belief that knowledge is 'real' and external to individuals. In positivist research, people's views are not considered to be 'factual', but are deemed 'subjective', and difficult to measure. Eisner (1993) wrote that we tend to avoid researching what we cannot measure, but, according to Eisner, this should not stop us from attempting to do so. Cohen and Manion (1994) argue that positivism is not appropriate in the study of human behaviour. They state;

Where positivism is less successful, ... is in its application to the study of human behaviour where the immense complexity of human nature and the elusive and intangible quality of social phenomena contrast strikingly with the order and regularity of the natural world. P12

Cohen and Manion continue, writing that in the context of a classroom

positivism is a 'mammoth challenge', due to the problems of teaching, learning and human interaction.

Quantitative research is concerned with data that can be 'measured'. In terms of the classroom, quantitative research can 'measure' children's behaviour, e.g. how many S.I.s a child engages in. Insofar as my research considered the importance of the environment, and its possible affects upon children's behaviour, a quantitative approach would have been limited, since it would not have paid attention to people's views.

Qualitative research is another approach. Here, stress is put upon the importance of subjective experiences of individuals, and recognition that this can have an affect upon their behaviour. People do not act in a vacuum, but tend to vary their behaviours depending upon their environment. Hence one possible reason why 'Different schools make different differences' (Watkins 2003). Although this research employed some quantitative research, e.g. counting the number of S.I.s at the beginning and end of the research, it largely relied on qualitative data. Subjective views can be compared and contrasted in order to reach what Eisner (1993) terms a 'shared framework'. Although, as cautioned by Eisner, we must recognize that our 'shared meanings' will be a product of our own making, and that what we regard as true at present, may change as we gain more knowledge and understanding.

My role also meant that I could be a participant observer. In this type of study the researcher has to be accepted as a member of the group, and so can become as unobtrusive as possible. Bell (1998) noted that a participant observer can do the same job or live in the same environment or circumstances as the individuals for lengthy periods. My role as practitioner researcher (see later) complements this.

My research also reflects a phenomenological approach, in that it ‘advocates the study of direct experience taken at *face value*’ p29, Cohen and Manion (1994), (my italics). This is an important point in the seeking of children’s views. If their views are to be taken at ‘face value’, then they must be listened to *and* appropriately responded to. The adult may not agree with the child’s point of view, but the child’s views are valid to him, and so worthy of attention.

Rose (2002) is also an advocate of practitioner research, including the field of Special Educational Needs. Rose writes that people with disabilities have often been the focus of research, but he makes the distinction of researching ‘*with*’ rather than ‘*on*’ them. Hence there is a need for the researcher to adopt more inclusive practices, and this is more likely to happen if the researcher is a teacher who regularly works with the children, rather than a researcher who does not know them. This is in accordance with my role as teacher and practitioner researcher.

Having outlined the need for qualitative research when seeking the people’s views, and the benefits of practitioner research, I now turn to the area of action research, and its value in a school setting.

B. Action Research

Action research focuses on a specific problem in a specific setting, and is designed to add to practitioners’ knowledge. McNiff (2002) emphasises the need for action research to be carried out by practitioners, rather than external researchers, and that this can be undertaken by people in any context, regardless of their status or position. The emphasis is on the ‘action researcher’ thinking carefully about what they are doing. McNiff also emphasises how there is no such ‘thing’ as action research, it is not a ‘self-contained object of enquiry’. Instead, McNiff writes;

It is important always to locate discussions about action research

within the real-life experiences of real-life people. The 'meaning' of action research is in the way people live together. Pp15-16.

Such a view is paramount in my work. This type of research is particularly relevant for teachers to use in schools since they will identify a problem in their setting, and then attempt to solve it in that setting. It can be large or small scale. Stenhouse (1975) writes that the main barriers to teacher researcher are psychological and social. This is because, according to Stenhouse, examining one's professional performance can be personally threatening and the social climate where teachers work usually offers little support for this threat. However, this does not mean that teachers should avoid this role. Cohen and Manion (1994) write that action research is;

concerned with diagnosing a problem in a specific context and attempting to solve it in that context... P186

Consequently, a teacher working in their classroom will be in a good position to diagnose and attempt to solve a problem in their everyday environment. Whilst my work is based upon practitioner research, I used an 'action research' approach since it seeks to improve school practices in my own classroom, interlinking research, action and evaluation. The emphasis is not on obtaining generalizable knowledge, but on improving practices or policy specific to that setting. Nevertheless, it may be that some findings will become generalisable to similar settings. Blaxter *et. al.* emphasise how action research can lead to change, and that the findings of the research can be used to inform future research.

An important feature of action research is its cyclical nature, with the research process being viewed as spiral, with repeated cycles of further 'action research'. Its framework consists of stages that are reflected upon and adapted as the research progresses. Cohen and Manion (1994) give eight stages of action

research, although they acknowledge that these stages comprise a flexible framework, and will be interpreted or adjusted depending upon the particular research in question. Very briefly, the first stage is concerned with identifying the problem, with further stages designed to illuminate the problem, and selection of research procedures. Finally, the data is interpreted and an overall evaluation of the research made. The results are evaluated and this then leads to further research in the light of the 'new' knowledge. Throughout the whole process, the stages are reflected upon, hence the cyclical nature of action research. Such reflection ensures that any necessary changes can be incorporated into the research (Cohen and Manion *ibid.*). However, McNiff (2002) notes that care must be taken when adopting a prescriptive model since they tend to assume that practice can be portrayed as linear and sequential, yet this is frequently not so, and that practitioners should use such models as purely guidelines for how they hope things will turn out. This is crucial when working in the area of children and their behaviour. It is possible that the planned intervention could have an effect upon the children that I had not considered, possibly leading to a detrimental affect upon the children. For instance, when working with children, their needs can vary due to factors both within and outside the teacher's control. In the case of my research, as time progressed I had to consider any changes (positive or negative) in children's behaviour that may have required further attention, with possible adaptations to the planned research. The children's behaviour could have deteriorated. It was vital that I continually reflected on the data and responded to any effects (planned or otherwise) that this research may have had. This work may be viewed as travelling on a journey. The end of this research may not necessarily be the end of the journey, but merely a stopping point, with further travels to come.

Having discussed action research and its relevance for practitioners working in their own setting, I have also highlighted the importance of reflective practice. This is considered below.

B.1. Reflective practice

As noted by Cohen and Manion (1994), a feature of action research is its flexibility and adaptability. The process of action research demands that the researcher continually reflect upon what they are doing, with a view to making amendments. Such reflection may also lead to further cycles of research. McNiff (2002) puts more emphasis on the need for the researcher to reflect on themselves, claiming that action research can also be called a kind of 'self-reflective practice', and that the idea of self-reflection is central. This is because, according to McNiff, this type of research involves people doing research on themselves in company with other people. McNiff continues;

Action research is an enquiry by the self into the self, undertaken in company with others acting as research participants and critical learning partners. P15

A teacher who engages in practitioner researcher should be in an ideal position to reflect upon their current practice and their research, since they know the environment, staff and children well. Their reflections may bring changes that benefit their practice. Such reflections may not be recognized by an 'outside' researcher, yet could be invaluable. Hence the need for those who carry out action research to continually reflect upon their work as it progresses.

C. Ethics

I gained written permission from the carers of the children engaged in this research. I also gained permission from staff to examine their completed school's serious incident forms.

It could be argued that the children in this project were too young to understand the concept of a 'research project' and so seeking their consent was unnecessary. Fine and Sandstrom (1988) disagree with this. They state that the

children should be told as much as possible, even if they do not understand the full explanation. Morgan *et al.* (2002) note that young children are more accurately described as giving assent rather than consent.

I obtained the children's verbal permission to take part in this research. At the beginning of the work I explained my reasons for this research and what I had planned. The children were encouraged to ask questions about the research. Their questions were largely practical ones.

This research included interviewing children. It is common practice for me to ask the children questions in lessons. This had implications since I needed to ensure that the children knew that their interview questions were different from the usual 'lesson questions' *and* that their comments would be used for very different purposes. I agree with Scott (2000) in that the ethics that apply to interviewing children should be more stringent than those that apply to interviewing adults. Children tend to be relatively powerless and have little recourse to channels of complaint. It is vital that the children in this research knew of their rights, and that they could withdraw from this research at any time. Informed consent does not necessarily mean informed refusal. The children were not on equal terms with the researcher, since I was also their teacher. Would the children feel confident enough to say they did not want to partake, or wished to withdraw? I agree with Lewis (2002) in that it is crucial that researchers allow children 'informed dissent'. This is a difficult issue in my school since consent and refusal can be used by the children (consciously or otherwise) to suit their more immediate needs. Past experience has shown that when a child is angry in school he may use whatever way he can to 'hurt' the member of staff, including kicking and punching. However, if a child is to be prevented from doing so, e.g. staff use a 'Physical Intervention' (P.I.), i.e. staff physically restrain the child, then he may use words to inflict pain. There was a possibility that a child would demand to be withdrawn from the research simply because he was angry with me, and knows that this could 'hurt' me. In such a

case, with the rights of the child paramount, the child would have been withdrawn. Consequently, there was a risk of children being withdrawn. With such small numbers of children, this could have been very detrimental to the research. Fortunately, this did not happen.

Past experience also shows that when the child is calm, he may rescind his comments, and so ask to be engaged in the research again. If so, would he be doing this because he genuinely felt he still wanted to participate, or because he felt strong remorse for his actions and believed that this was a way of gaining favour? Clearly if this situation arose it would have needed careful consideration, from myself, staff and the parent(s) of the child to agree on the correct course of action. Fortunately, this issue remained theoretical.

Usually schools reflect a power imbalance, where the teacher has authority over the children. There have been some attempts to redress this imbalance, e.g. school councils, but there is some concern that this is merely paying lip service, (Garner 1995). This research is took a small step forward in empowering the children to recognise that their own behaviour does not occur in a vacuum. It was made clear that adults play a part in their environment, and hence have an affect on children's behaviour – positive or negative. From this point of view, the children may have received benefits over and above the planned interventions, e.g. they were made aware that adults may have some responsibility for children's behaviour choices. Care must be taken though. To quote Rose (2002);

Beginning with good intentions does not preclude the need to constantly revisit the purpose and ethics of research and to continually question its potential impact upon the lives of pupils with special educational needs. P47.

This was paramount.

In order to protect all of the children in this research pseudonyms are used throughout.

I now give details of my research design.

D. Research design

Whilst Cohen and Manion's (1994) give eight stages for action research, that are then repeated as required, McNiff (2002) emphasizes the importance of flexibility, and that the process of action research is not sequential, nor necessarily rational. McNiff proposes a 'generative transformational evolutionary process' where cycles of action are repeated, with an allowance for further spirals of 'action reflection' alongside the main focus. McNiff views these spirals of 'action reflection' unfolding from themselves and folding back into themselves again. She claims that;

In action research terms it is possible to address multiple issues while still maintaining a focus on one.... p56

This is an important point for my work, yet the giving of stages can act as a simple initial structure for problem solving, which can be developed as the research progresses. With this in mind, I found the four stages of action research given by Cowne (2003) to be useful. These are given below.

1. Problem identification
2. Problem investigation/illumination
3. Problem intervention/solution
4. Problem evaluation

For the purposes of clarity, at the end of this section I have included a table that summarises all of the cycles of research in this work (see pages 81-85). I now discuss each stage in more detail.

D.1. Problem identification

Our school used Assertive Discipline (A.D.) (Canter L. and Canter M. 2001) to help children manage their behaviour and control their aggression. We had a reward system where those who followed the rules earned points. If they had enough points, they could earn a trip out at the end of every half term.

However, it soon became clear to staff and myself that by and large, the same children were earning the trip whilst a few were never earning it. We realised that we could correctly predict a small number of children who would never earn the trip. This led us to question if our reward system was effective.

In reality then, the initial research question that started this project was, 'Is our practice related to reducing the number of serious incidents effective?'. Staff then discussed how we could give more rewards over a shorter period of time to ensure that these 'failing' children could earn something, and so feel less of a failure and build self-esteem. However, the children this was specifically meant to help rarely earned the reward. In some instances, I noticed how some boys were told of the new reward system and appeared to fully understand what was required. Yet, within 20 minutes they would break the specific rule. It appeared that they were deliberately sabotaging the system that was designed to benefit them. What is more, not only were they not benefiting from the system, it may have also been reinforcing their feelings of low self-esteem and low self-worth. It appeared that our system of rewards and consequences was failing some children on a regular basis.

Alongside the concern that some children not benefiting from our reward system, staff and myself were concerned about the number of S.I.s that some children were engaging in. Sometimes children and staff were being hurt, and this could have been at least partly the reason why we had difficulties in staff recruitment and retention. To ascertain the extent of the problem, I decided to examine the number of S.I.s in our school. The easiest, and probably the most objective way to do this was to count the number of exclusions from our special school, since a child would only be excluded for behaviour that was considered

dangerous, e.g. assaulting someone.

I give below the number of fixed term exclusions we had at our school in the previous year (2001-2002).

D.1.1. Number of exclusions from our special school

Number of fixed term exclusions for academic year 2001-2002

Year groups	Group 1 Year 2	Group 2 Years 4 and 5	Total
Number of pupils	3	7	10
Fixed term exclusions	18	27	45

Table 2. Number of fixed term exclusions from our special school for academic year 2001-2002

As can be seen, we had a total of 45 fixed term exclusions in one year. That means that we had at least 45 S.I.s in one year.

In summary, I concluded that our reward system was not effective for some children, and that some may have been damaged by it.

The next stage was to investigate the problem.

D.2. Problem investigation

From the first stage of this action research I found that a few children were regularly not earning rewards, and that as a school we were having far too many S.I.s. My major concern was that our system of rewarding children for following rules and giving negative consequences for those who did not, was ineffectual for some children. We could not rely on a behaviourist approach that considered only overt behaviour. My first two research questions given at the beginning of this work were;

1. Can children be encouraged to express their views as an alternative outlet

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for aggression?

2. Can teachers use the views of children to help construct an environment that minimizes physical aggression?

In order to begin to answer these questions my next step was to examine the children's S.I.s, since this was when the children displayed their most extreme behaviour, and hence faced the most negative consequences, e.g. fixed term exclusion and the associated feelings of low self-esteem that can hinder a child's progress. My hypothesis was that we needed to consider the 'whole' child, including his 'inner world' and how he makes sense of his social environment. At this point I realised that the two original questions needed to have more focus, principally on how staff could support children so they would avoid future similar S.I.s. The following research question evolved;

'How can we help children to deal with their feelings of anger?'

This involved, when examining the S.I.s, seeking the views of children about their actions in order to better understand their interpretation of events. This could also help staff and children to work together to create an environment more conducive to supporting children during 'high arousal' times.

D.2.1 Examination of serious incidents.

Our school uses a pro-forma for staff to complete when a child engages in a S.I. (see appendix 2). These pro-formas seek more 'factual' information, and so were limited since I wanted to know the children's views on their S.I.s. They could have very different views about what happened from staff. In the literature review I noted how Booth *et. al.* (1992) stated that some teachers contribute to a child's aggressive response. If these children could explain their side of events there may be a chance that staff and children can work together to ensure it does not happen again. Furthermore, the very act of giving children

a 'voice' could also in itself be a major positive influence on helping children to control their strong emotions. Jelly *et al.* (2000), write that children who feel that they have little control over their own lives have an enormous boost to their self-esteem by simply having their views valued by an adult or peer, and this in turn can make a positive contribution to pupils' capacities to learn effectively.

Having decided that I would seek the children's views, I then had to consider the best means of doing this. The following section discusses the reasons for my decisions on the best way to seek the children's views.

D.2.1.1. The use of objects and drawings to gain children's views

France *et al.* (2000) write that the traditional methods for data collection, i.e. questionnaire and interview, can be 'alienating' for certain groups of young people. Instead, they propose a 'draw and talk' technique, where the young people use paper and pencils to express their opinions. Drawing can be an efficient way for collecting data from children, though it is not really appropriate in my particular case. The children I work with tend to need a lot of encouragement to record any work on paper. They lack the confidence, self-esteem and/or ability to engage in these tasks. During lessons staff give the children a lot of support in recorded work, e.g. writing part of their work for them, drawing a part of their picture. This is effective in lessons, where the staff have a good idea of what the individual wants to communicate (i.e. something related to the lesson). However, if we are trying to gain the child's personal views we could be guilty of 'putting words into their mouths'. Lewis (2002) also cautions against using drawings since the meanings can be misinterpreted. It is for these reasons given that I chose not to use drawings to elicit children's views.

D.2.1.2. Talking and listening to gain young children's views

Children's views may be elicited through talk. Such talk could be through discussions or interviews. For the purposes of this research, I was concerned

that discussions to elicit the children's views could be too wide, and so not draw on the necessary salient points. I now consider the use of structured interviews to elicit children's views.

D.2.1.3. Interviews to gain young children's views

Whilst there has been some research that has been successful in seeking the views of children in special schools for children identified as having EBSD, (de Pear 1995, Sinclair Taylor 1995, Garner 1995), their research has been largely with older children. It tends to be more difficult to obtain the views of younger children, since they may not yet have developed the necessary verbal skills to express themselves.

Another limitation in seeking young children's views is that they may not have the cognitive ability to reflect upon people's actions and events. Piaget's (1896-1980) identified stages of cognitive development concerning all children, although the ages they are achieved will vary between individuals. Piaget wrote that children aged approximately 2-7 years were egocentric, and hence unable to see another's point of view until at the end of this stage. Donaldson (1978) found that they could do so if the context had meaning for them. Hence the importance of ensuring that the context has meaning for the children. Stern and Peterson (1999) sought to elicit the views of children aged 4 to 11 using structured interviews. They used vignettes, telling of stories about the wrongdoing of a hypothetical child. To put the vignettes into context for the children, and hence make them more meaningful, the hypothetical child was matched to the interviewee in age and gender. This made it easier for the interviewee to identify with the fictitious child. Similarly, each vignette was designed to reflect the everyday wrongdoings that are common amongst young children, e.g. riding a bike without a helmet, stealing, physical aggression. In these conditions, the research was successful in gaining views of young children.

My research varies from Stern and Peterson in that mine seeks the views of the children about *real* incidents that they engaged in. This meant they did not have to empathise with a fictitious character, but discuss their own experiences.

Nisbett and Wilson (1977) claim that verbal reports are not good indicators of actual thought processes. However, Scott (2000) states that children from the age of 7 are able to use individual and group semi-structured interviews, and that children do provide reliable responses if the questions are meaningful to their lives. Conversely, although my research may have attempted to make the interviews more meaningful by discussing children's views about their *own* 'wrongdoings', this could have made it more difficult since the children may not have wanted to discuss something where they may have felt at fault or blamed. I needed to be sensitive when conducting the interviews, and ensure that the child did not believe that the interview was a part of the 'punishment' for his behaviour. Such issues could have become clear not only by the child's words, but by his body language too.

Similarly, I also needed to bear in mind the power relationship between us. Although there is an aim to empower the children to take an active part in their environment, being the teacher, I had the ultimate authority. I had to consider the earlier quote from Rose (2002), in that I needed to continually question any impact of this research upon the children. If I believed that the child was in distress, I cancelled the interview. (This occurred on a few occasions). This could have put the research at risk (i.e. if the children did not partake in the interview), but the needs of the children were paramount. Fortunately, the majority of the children engaged in the interviews.

With Stern and Peterson's work in mind, this research sought the views of children using a semi-structured interview (see appendix 3). I avoided a structured interview since there could have been issues that I was not aware of, and so would not ask questions about it. This gave the children some opportunity to give their views that I had not considered relevant or anticipated.

I used more open-ended questions to allow the children to express their opinions and ideas that may not otherwise have been voiced.

Another advantage of using interviews is that the interviewer can act as a sounding board, helping the person to consider other ways of acting. In order to reduce any misconceptions, e.g. people thinking I was spying on them, children believing it was a counseling session it was made clear to everyone why I conducted these interviews.

The use of semi-structured questionnaire in my work had other advantages too. It eased the analysis of the data, since each interview followed a set pattern, and so made it easier to compare and contrast individual responses. This was also advantageous to children who engaged in two or more S.I.s. since they could become more experienced, confident and competent as they had more 'practice' in answering the set questions. Then again, they could have become bored and/or dislike the process, and so engage in fewer comments in successive interviews. Fortunately, this was not the case.

D.2.1.4. Problems when seeking views of children

The child may only need to acknowledge how he feels to himself, without 'sharing' it with others. There could be a danger of too much inward reflection. Train (1993) expressed concern that children should not spend a large amount of time examining and expressing their innermost feelings. In this research care was taken to ensure that each child was coping with the extra demands that the research put upon them. There was a danger that a child would appear distressed with this research process. If so, the child would have to be withdrawn, at least from the most anxiety provoking part of the research. As noted by Rose (2002) I needed to question the potential impact of this work upon the lives of the children. The needs of the children were paramount in this research. It was noted by Lewis (2002), that accessing children's views can

never be achieved “perfectly”. This can only be an aim. I had to ensure that the children are comfortable being a part of the research process. Hence the need for this research to be adaptable.

Similarly, the views of teachers who witnessed or partook in an aggressive incident should also be sought. Their views will also be reflected upon to see how we can change our practices to support children when they are angry. Moreover, staff views will help to triangulate the data. Their views may also shed light on their training needs in terms of CPD.

D.2.1.5. Staff's views re: serious incidents

This part of the research involved examining the perceptions of staff with a view to developing emerging theory on how staff can offer support to children in order to control or reduce aggression. Another advantage to seeking staff views is that if staff share their views, there is a chance that they can reach ‘shared meanings’, and so work closer as a team in supporting children. Bearing in mind that staff responses may lead to a child being excluded (Watkins 2003), conversely, staff may help avoid a child being suspended from school. Our school already has pro-formas for staff to complete when they engage in a S.I., but these do not cover aspects that were of relevance for the research, e.g ‘What do you feel the child could have done instead, to avoid hurting someone?’. Therefore, in tandem with completing the schools pro-forma for S.I.s, staff also completed an observation sheet for the purposes of this research (appendix 4). They also completed a questionnaire which related to their views about the S.I. (appendix 5). As with the children’s interviews, comments from the staff will be used to inform future practice when dealing with the next S.I.

Originally, I intended to obtain staff’s views using a semi-structured interview. However, after consultation with staff we agreed that this could be too

cumbersome, bearing in mind the number of S.I.s we were having. Therefore, I used a semi-structured questionnaire that staff could complete at their own convenience.

Issues of confidentiality were discussed with staff, clarifying that names would not be given, nor other staff allowed read their interview responses.

If we accept the hypothesis that if children are given a voice, then they will be less likely to use aggression as a means of communication, then this needs to be explicitly encouraged in school. The difficulty could be that these children lack the necessary skills to express their voice. Hence, it is vital that these skills are expressly taught *alongside* seeking children's views. Therefore, children need to be taught to communicate more effectively.

In summary, I had identified that our system to encourage children to follow rules was not working for some children. I hypothesised that we needed to consider the 'whole' child, and his innermost feelings, not just on his overt behaviours. Since the children displayed their most aggressive behaviours during S.I.s, I chose to interview children about what had happened with a view to seeking their perceptions *and* their views on what could have been done to avoid another similar incident.

So, during the first stage the children were asked to give their views about their own S.I., and invited to offer suggestions on how to avoid another similar incident. Any suggestions that the children made about an earlier S.I. could be used if they engaged in future S.I.s. In reality, this part of the research could be continued indefinitely, since staff and children could be continually working to find better ways of avoiding aggression.

Any changes in the number of S.I.s could be attributed to the research intervention (although other factors may also play a part, e.g. change in home circumstances). Therefore, it was vital this data was frequently analysed to ensure that the intervention was not making it more difficult for the children to control their strong emotions. If this were the case, then the research would need careful consideration with possible adaptations to ensure that it was not detrimental to the children.

The next part of the research was based upon my reflection of my work so far. I believed that some children who engage in inappropriate behaviour lack verbal skills (Sage 2002) and misinterpreted teachers' social cues (Fitzsimmons 1998). Consequently, I hypothesised that the children would probably need lessons to develop their skills in *all* areas of communication. I turn now to my planned intervention stage of this research.

D.3.i. Problem intervention – phase 1 (Special school)

The reflection that the children would probably need lessons to develop their communication skills led to this third stage of the research. The next research question to evolve was;

‘Does teaching skills of communication encourage children to express their views as an alternative outlet for aggression?’

In line with McNiff (2002), as this work progressed it led to further spirals of action-reflection alongside the main focus. For clarity purposes, I have split this stage into two phases. I give below the initial stage, i.e. phase 1 (special school). This is followed by further research that developed as the work progressed, i.e. phase 2 (mainstream school).

I now turn to the research tools used when teaching the lessons, and further research that developed from this part of the work.

This part (phase 1) of the research comprises;

- Lessons to develop personal and social skills
- Assessing children's skills before and after research period
- Seeking children's views about which lessons they found to be of most use.
- Parents' views

D.3.1. Lessons to develop personal and social skills (phase 1, special school)

The lessons started with work on developing vocabulary to express emotions. This is in accordance with Sharp (2001). (See appendices 6.1. to 6.7 for sample lesson plans). I had a non-participant observer who completed an observation sheet (see appendix 7), and I completed one myself as soon as possible after the lesson. These data from these sheets were used to analyse the findings, and to aid my evaluation for the planning of the following lesson. For instance, I took into account how the children responded, their success or otherwise in achieving the objective(s), their motivation, and other factors which arose during the research period, e.g. needing extra work on the difference between aggression and assertion. I considered the motivation of the children as highly critical since it is an important factor in learning. The children in my group can be highly motivated but quickly become bored, which is detrimental to learning. I needed to ensure that the lessons were varied enough to avoid boredom, yet continued with the aim to develop communication skills. Consequently, at the beginning of the research I did not have a series of planned lessons. Each lesson was planned following the evaluation of the previous lesson.

The teaching methods varied, depending upon the lesson being taught. The main method was discussions, with sharing of ideas/thoughts. There was also some recorded work, but this was limited. Our children tend to find drawing and writing anxiety provoking. This is not conducive to encouraging and/or learning to express views. Such methods, i.e. a stronger emphasis on discussion and practical activities rather than recorded work, is similar to our teaching of foundation subjects, especially PSHE. It was important to use similar teaching methods since the children could find the lessons in the research anxiety provoking if I made significant changes. In my experience, children identified as having EBSD tend to find changes anxiety provoking.

D.3.1.1. Frequency and duration of lessons

I planned to teach two lessons per week. Fewer lessons could have led to not enough work covered, and the children possibly forgetting previous work. More lessons per week would probably have been too cumbersome in terms of writing up observations and evaluations. Moreover, the children tend to become bored if their lessons follow too similar a theme throughout the week. The time spent on each lesson varied according to the planned activity and the responses of the children.

D.3.1.2. Development of skills in lessons

Sharp and Faupel (2002) write that there should be an incremental approach to the teaching of emotional literacy. According to them, this starts with the teaching and exploration of a 'feelings vocabulary'. This is then developed into an exploration of feelings. Later, children should be taught management and appropriate expression of feelings. Consequently, in line with Sharp and Faupel, the lessons in this research started with teaching a 'feelings vocabulary'. Only when it was ascertained that the children were competent in this area were the lessons developed further. This was because if the children did not have the necessary vocabulary, any explorations of such feelings would have been limited. The lessons needed to include the teaching of assertion in

place of aggression as recognized by Kelly (1996). Assertion can be a positive way to deal with aggression without resorting to violence.

Sharp and Faupel also add that the emotional curriculum must be treated as a 'curriculum in action'. This was reflected in this research, with future lessons planned after an evaluation of the previous lessons, to ensure the children are achieving the set objectives.

There was a danger that the children may not have made sufficient progress in these early stages. This would have possibly meant that the children would not have had the necessary skills to engage in interviews about their behaviour. Fortunately, this was not the case.

It must also be kept in mind that whilst these lessons are taught, I continued in my usual role of teacher. This meant that the children probably experienced 'further' learning relevant to this research, at other times of the day. I used the research diary to note events, ideas etc. that were pertinent, and had not occurred during the set research periods, i.e. during an interview or lesson.

D.3.1.3. Research tools during the teaching of personal and social education

Whilst I was a participant observer during the activities, this made recording of the children's comments etc. difficult. I considered using videotape. Hopkins (1993) lists the advantages and disadvantages of using a video camera. Whilst this can mean that "behavioural patterns of teacher and pupil can be seen" p133, the children tend to move around the room, making it difficult to keep individuals 'on camera'. Also, the children would probably have found the video recorder a distraction, possibly 'acting up' for the camera, even after the video has been in the room for a while. Consequently, the use of a video camera can cause more problems than it solves. Therefore, I decided not to video the lessons.

The use of an audio tape can be as problematic as videoing, for similar reasons. Another disadvantage of audio recording is the time it will take to transcribe it. There were two planned lessons per week over a period of six months. This would probably have been too cumbersome. I decided that I and a non-participant staff member would be observers. The observer wrote an observation sheet during the lesson, whilst I completed mine as soon as possible after the lesson. Then, the staff's and my pro-formas were examined to ensure validity. Teachers and children were allowed to disagree - opposing views can be enlightening. I interviewed the observer if there were any discrepancies between our observations of the same lesson, so reaching a consensus, in accordance with Eisner (1993).

The teaching of the lessons was entirely in keeping with action research. It comprised mini cycles of action (i.e. the teaching of a lesson), which was then reflected upon. As each lesson was taught it was evaluated, with the evaluation informing the planning of the next lesson. In this way I could ensure that the most successful lessons, or parts of lessons were built upon.

D.3.2. Assessing children's skills before and after research period

I asked the children to do a self-assessment sheet relating to their beliefs about their own skills of communication. I wanted to use a simple self-assessment sheet that would be accessible to all of the children. One of the schemes of work I used incorporated a very simple tick sheet with pictures that would aid the children's understanding (appendix 8). I also believed it would appeal to the children. This data could give an indication of the children's present skills of communication (or at least, their perceptions of their present skills of communication), and could be used in planning of the lessons for this research. Additionally, the children could repeat the self-assessment sheet at the end of the research period. Using the same sheet at the end of the research period could show if a child changed any feelings about himself during or after the

research period. Such change of feelings may not be obvious to a member of staff, but could be of great importance to an individual child. Comparisons can then be made between children and individuals before/after the research period. Whilst this data will be limited, e.g. it could depend upon the child's mood at that particular time, it may show a trend with children feeling more/less skilled in communicating after the research intervention.

D.3.3. Seeking children's views about which lessons they found to be of most use.

In this work I also believed that the children should evaluate the lessons, particularly in regard to their views on what they found to be of use. This was to ascertain which lessons, or parts of lesson were the most effective for them. Such information could be used at a later date to produce a scheme of work designed to support children in communicating effectively through verbal means. I decided not to seek their views after every lesson, because I wanted them to decide which one or ones they thought were the most valuable for them. For this part of the research I used an 'open' group discussion. In this way, children could cover areas that I may not have considered. Additionally, they could share ideas, with an emphasis on no answers being 'incorrect'. They were personal views and so children could agree or disagree. As in the examination of S.I.s, this type of data collection could be ongoing.

Having begun the research process I then reflected how others could offer information that could be of relevance to this work. In particular, I sought the views of the parents. The reasons for this were that they could validate any information the children gave related to this area, and because the parents may offer more information about the children's past experiences in relation to school. This is discussed below.

D.3.4. Interviews with parents.

An examination of the general history of the child could be enlightening, particularly in terms of schooling, in seeking possible reasons why a child acts as he does. The information I researched here related to any traumas their child had experienced, before and after starting nursery/school, and their experiences in school. Parents were also asked how they believe their child can be helped. As with the other interviews, I devised a semi-structured questionnaire (appendix 9). This gave the same advantages as the children's semi-structured interviews, i.e. to aid analysis of the data, to keep to the relevant areas and to allow parents to add information I may not have considered.

As with other interviews, care was taken to reduce any feelings of laying blame, and that the purpose of the interviews was for the sake of helping the child. Issues of confidentiality were discussed and anonymity (for parent and child) was assured.

So far, my research has been concerned with children in special school. The following section, i.e. phase 2, refers to the inclusion of children identified as having EBSD in mainstream school. The research question was;

How skilled do mainstream teachers feel to include children with EBSD in their classroom?

This is to ascertain mainstream teachers' views of their experiences and training in the area of including children identified as having EBSD, and is discussed below.

D.3.ii. Problem intervention - phase 2 (Inclusion of children identified as having EBSD in mainstream school)

D.3.5. Views of mainstream teachers

At this point I reflected on how the core staff who work in my school (including the majority who partook in this research) were experienced in working with children identified as having EBSD. Our aim is to return our children back to mainstream school, but it is possible that the majority of staff in mainstream school may not know how to best support a child when he feels strong emotions. This could be why returning a child to a former environment (e.g. mainstream school) could bring back former behaviours (Barnes *et. al.* 1984). This led me to seek the views of mainstream teachers to identify how skilled they felt at including children identified as having EBSD in their classrooms. Such information should highlight the mainstream teachers' views of their needs in terms of CPD in this area. The questionnaire was in two parts. The first part related to children whom they identified as having EBSD, and attend or attended their school full time. This was to ascertain their experiences before working with us. The second part referred to their experiences on our inclusion programme, and was split into two sections, namely;

section 1 - the teachers' initial experience of our inclusion process

section 2 - approximately 6 months or more after the start of the inclusion process

The reason for incorporating different time periods was due to OfSTED (2004) stating that SENCOs identified the perceptions of staff as major barriers to effective inclusion. Such negative perceptions may diminish after time, for instance, they may gain from the experience, which in turn could increase their confidence

The data from the questionnaires can be used at a later date to identify possible training needs for such teachers in order to ensure children identified as having EBSD have the best chance of a successful inclusion in the mainstream school.

I used a semi-structured questionnaire (appendix 10) to ensure that relevant information was collected, but there was scope for the teachers to add their own comments that I may not have considered. A semi-structured questionnaire was used for reasons given earlier, i.e. to ease analysis of data, to keep to relevant areas, and also to allow staff to add comments that I had not anticipated.

Some teachers, particularly those with no special training in behaviour management (usually mainstream staff) may have found this questionnaire anxiety provoking, or even hostile. Reasons for this questionnaire were given to help ease any fears of possible negative motives, e.g. to blame teachers. Confidentiality was assured.

D.3.6. Views of our inclusion worker

At this point I then considered the role our inclusion worker plays. She works with our children both in our special school and in the children's mainstream school. Therefore, she is in a unique position in that she sees the children in both environments. It was because of this that I chose to seek her views about our inclusion programme. This was carried out by means of informal meetings. The inclusion worker also wrote notes to ensure she did not omit salient points.

D.3.7. Views of children engaged on an inclusion programme

Whilst the views of adults are important, my next reflection was that this area of the research would be limited if I did not seek the views of the two children engaged on an inclusion programme. These children were invited to give their opinions on what they believe is good practice for making their environment (in mainstream school) more conducive to them. This was to illuminate best

practice for ensuring that inclusion programmes have the best chance of success. To ensure maximum comments from the children, this part of the research was not carried out until the end, i.e. after they had their lessons designed to develop their skills of communication. In order to obtain this data I chose to use an 'open' discussion. In this way the children could discuss things that were relevant to themselves, rather than what I thought may be relevant. This method was suitable since the children involved here were the oldest and most verbally able. I chose to administer this interview with the two children together. This was so they could say their own views, and add to each other's comments.

D.4. Problem evaluation

Having decided on my research plan I now turn to the important area of whole project evaluation. I have broken this down into the main parts of the research.

D.4.1. Examination of serious incidents

One evaluation will be the amount and relevance of comment that the children give about their S.I.s. It could be that they talk very little, which would suggest that they have not benefited from the experience of having their views heard, and/or the teaching of lessons designed to develop their communication skills. However, the children may have benefited but cannot or will not yet speak. It may be that more time will be needed to continue this work after the research period.

The views of staff could also indicate some discrepancies between their perceptions with those of the children, and/or those of other staff. If there are discrepancies these will need to be resolved to ensure that the children are being best served and not receiving inconsistent responses from staff, e.g. a staff member relying on solely behaviouristic approaches to aggression.

The overall success or otherwise of this research could be measured by the number of S.I.s the children engaged in before, during and the end of the research period. Any reduction in S.I.s, either as a group or individual children, could signify that attempting to understand how a child makes sense of his environment whilst also encouraging giving him a voice, could lead to him using means other than physical to express himself. However, some caution must be exercised since there could be other factors which affect children's behaviour other than the research intervention, e.g. maturation of the children, change in home circumstances.

One can see here how since each child may give different strategies to support him during difficult times, this type of data collection could be continually ongoing, particularly as children leave the school and new ones attend.

D.4.2. Phase 1, special school. Teaching of personal and social education.

As with the examination of the S.I.s, the success criteria of the lessons could be measured by the number of S.I. at the end of the research period. Again though, as above, other factors may have played a part, so care must be taken when analysing the data.

I now turn to the success criteria for the research that involved including children identified as having EBSD in mainstream school.

D.4.3. Phase 2, mainstream school. Including children identified as having EBSD mainstream school.

This part of the research comprised interviewing the children who were engaged on an inclusion programme, our inclusion worker, and a postal questionnaire to mainstream staff who worked with one of our children on an inclusion programme. As with the children's comments in their interviews about their S.I.s, the success criteria for this phase will be if the comments

made by staff and children can be acted upon. It may illuminate how staff can better support children in mainstream schools.

In relation to the mainstream teachers' views, I wish to ascertain how much training they had in working with children identified as having EBSD, with a view to developing a training programme some time in the future.

Since this data (from the children, inclusion worker and mainstream staff) refers to the later part of this research, its success or otherwise may not be apparent during this research period, but at a later date, i.e. when I have had more time to act upon it.

D.4.4. Dissemination of this work

When this research is completed, I will share the findings with the staff in my school, and the teachers in mainstream school that took part. Rose (2002) expresses concern that teachers view research as having little relevance to 'real life', and that to overcome this, teachers should become researchers themselves. However, Rose stipulates that;

it is essential that teacher researchers share their work to other colleagues. Failure to do this will be simply to establish another layer of researchers who are perceived by teachers as being distant and removed from the realities of classroom practice. P47

Therefore, it is essential that the findings from this work are shared with my colleagues, both in special and mainstream school. This is to ensure that any successful practices will continue to be used, whilst unsuccessful ones avoided. This may be easier said than done. There may be staff who show little interest, or who have very different views. The main emphasis will be to encourage staff to share their views and engage in an open dialogue. This could lead to further research. I will share the findings in my school in a staff meeting. They will be

<p>STAGE 2 Problem investigation Research question – How can we help children to deal with their feelings of anger? 1. Examination of serious incidents a) Recording of serious incidents <i>(to find how many S.I.s children were engaging in).</i> <u>Success criteria</u> – reduction in no. of S.I.s towards end of research period.</p> <p>b) Interviews with child who became aggressive <i>(to find their perception of events with a view to using this information to reach a 'shared meaning' of the social environment and hence avoid similar incidents occurring).</i> <u>Success criteria</u> – children offering comment that help staff to help children avoid a similar incident in the future</p> <p>c) Views of staff who witnessed or engaged in a S.I. <i>(to find if their perception of events was in keeping with others (validation) and to encourage staff to reflect upon their own practice).</i> <u>Success criteria</u> – staff have 'shared meanings' of S.I.s they witnessed or took part in – staff reflecting on own practice</p> <p><i>Reflection on data</i> Whilst children are being encouraged to express their views, they probably do not have the necessary skills to communicate their views. Therefore, they should benefit from lessons specifically designed to teach such skills.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School based serious incident forms (appendix 2) • semi-structured questionnaire administered through interview (appendix 3) • staff observation form (appendix 4) • staff questionnaire (appendix 5) 	Nov. 2003 – Mar. 2004
<p>STAGE 3 Phase 1, special school. Problem intervention Research question – Does teaching skills of communication encourage children to verbally express their views as an alternative outlet for aggression? 2. Teaching of personal and social education a) lessons taught to develop personal and social education <i>(to develop skills of communication)</i> <u>Success criteria</u> – lesson evaluations show that children appeared to achieve the given objectives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pro-forma for lesson observation (researcher and staff) (appendix 7) 	Dec. 2003 – May 2004

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lesson observations show that children discuss their views in more detail - children engage in fewer S.I.s (since they are possibly using verbal means of communication rather than physical) <p>b) assessing children's skills at beginning and end of research (<i>to compare and contrast children's views about their own competence in communication skills</i>).</p> <p><u>Success criteria</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - children say they have improved in their skills of communication at the end of the research period <p>c) seeking children's views about which lessons they learned the most from (<i>to ascertain which lessons children believed were of most use</i>).</p> <p><u>Success criteria</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identification of most effective lessons (or parts of lessons) to develop skills of communication. <p><u>Further research that developed from the above</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Parents' views re: their children's past experiences in schools. (<i>To validate the children's comments and add more information</i>). <p><u>Success criteria</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - validation of children's comments, especially in relation to their past experiences in mainstream school. <p><i>Reflection on data</i></p> <p>So far, this work has been concerned with the children in our special school. If they were to make sufficient progress in their behaviour, they will be considered for an inclusion programme back to mainstream school. One concern I had was that the children could be returning to former environments that may have contributed to their aggressive incidents. With this in mind, I reflected that it would be beneficial to seek the views of staff and children who work on our inclusion programme in mainstream school.</p> <p><i>Phase 2 – mainstream school</i></p> <p>Research question – How skilled do mainstream teachers feel to include children identified as having EBSD in their classroom?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's self-assessment sheet (appendix 8) • open group discussion • semi-structured interview (appendix 9) 	<p>Dec 2003</p>
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<p>d). Views of mainstream teachers on their skills to include children identified as having EBSD in their classroom. <i>(To identify how skilled they feel they are, and possible future training needs in this area).</i></p> <p><u>Success criteria</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - mainstream staff give information on their experiences of including children identified as having EBSD <p>e) inclusion worker's views about our present inclusion programme. <i>(To find which were most successful practices to ensure children have best chance of success in mainstream school).</i></p> <p><u>Success criteria</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identification of good practice when including children in mainstream school <p>f) views of children engaged on an inclusion programme. <i>(To find what they considered good practice to ensure best chance of success on an inclusion programme).</i></p> <p><u>Success criteria</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - children state good practice for inclusion programme <p><i>Reflection on data</i></p> <p>Whilst this action is taking place I need to ensure that there are no detrimental affects upon the children as it progresses, e.g. increase in number of S.I.s.</p> <p>I will also need to consider which parts are most successful for the children. This will involve asking them their views about the research.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • semi-structured questionnaire administered through post (appendix 10) • open discussion and written notes. • interview with two boys engaged on an inclusion programme, using open discussion 	<p>Apr. – May 2004</p> <p>Mar. – June 2004</p>
<p>STAGE 4</p> <p>Whole project evaluation</p> <p>The success or otherwise of this project is;</p> <p>a) children expressing their views as an alternative outlet for aggression</p>	<p><u>Success criteria</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduction in number of serious incidents towards ends of research project - Children expressing their views verbally rather than using aggression, including telling staff how they can best support them when they feel anger 	<p>June 2004 onwards.</p>

<p>a) the dissemination of this work to others. This includes;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Share findings with special school staff (through giving copies of thesis to staff, then staff meeting and individual discussions, as appropriate)- Share findings with mainstream teachers (through sending copy of thesis and telephone conversations with offers to meet for discussion if required)- Share findings with children involved in this research (through telephone conversation for those who have since left our school, with offer to meet for discussion. For those still in our school, a meeting to discuss the findings)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- All concerned discuss project and offer comments which may lead to further research	<p>Ongoing</p>
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Table 3. Outline of research project.

This chapter has been concerned with the research methodology and choice of research tools for my work. One can see how my original problem identification led to reflection and further stages of research, forming my framework for action research. The following section considers the element of originality of this work.

E. Element of originality of this work

My research is concerned with seeking the views of children. The hypothesis being that if children express their views they will be less likely to use aggression as a means of communication. Adults will then be in a better position to listen to and help these children to act in a less aggressive way. Whilst there is research on children’s views, there has been less on the views of younger children. There has been even less research on seeking younger children’s views of their own aggressive behaviours.

Whilst there is much research on aggression in children, a lot of it concentrates on what the adults can 'do' to the child to make them behave in more socially acceptable ways. My research does not take the 'medical' model of the child, i.e. it does not assume that the problems are 'within' the child. Instead it adopts the social model. The environment (including the responses of adults towards the children) has been examined, with the emphasis on changing that environment in order to promote more socially acceptable behaviour. The children were encouraged to take some part in changing their environment. Evans *et al.* (2004) note the importance of seeking children's views when engaging in research projects. They write;

Children should be respected and valued in the same way as any other social group participating in research. Their views and experiences should be considered as a valuable resource for the development of interventions. P8.

This has been paramount in this research.

Evans *et al.* also noted how few studies evaluated strategies focused on aggression or socially 'inadequate' behaviour. My research paid particular attention to the views of children about their aggressive behaviours, as soon as possible after the incident. The approach adopted in this research may contribute towards fostering good relationships between children and staff. For children identified as having EBSD, this could be an achievement in itself.

The next chapter considers the findings of this research.

Chapter 4

Findings

(See appendix 11 for details of boys engaged in this study). All names are pseudonyms.

The findings have been put under three headings from the action research stages, as given below;

A. Problem investigation

Research question – *How can we help children to deal with their feelings of anger?*

- Examination of serious incidents

B. Problem intervention

Research question – *Does teaching of skills of communication encourage children to express their views as an alternative outlet for aggression?*

Phase 1, special school

- teaching of personal and social education
- parents' views

Phase 2, mainstream school

Research question – *How skilled do mainstream teachers feel to include children identified as having EBSD in their classroom?*

- views of mainstream teachers re: past experiences of including children identified as having EBSD in their classrooms
- views of inclusion worker
- views of children engaged on an inclusion programme

C. Problem evaluation

- Whole project evaluation

I turn now to the findings from the problem investigation, which examined the serious incidents during the research period.

A. Problem investigation

A.1. School based recording of serious incidents

For the purposes of this research the school based recording of S.I.s were of use for triangulation purposes, but, as expected, they did not offer further information.

A.2. Number of serious incidents

There were 21 S.I.s during the research period. Below is a breakdown of the number of each child’s S.I.s.

<i>Child</i>	Year group	Number of serious incidents
Alex	4	3
Ryan	4	0
Paul	4	0
Michael	3	5
Chris	3	0
Matt	2	6
David	2	7

Table 4. Total number of serious incidents for each child during the research period.

As can be seen, the two youngest children engaged in the most S.I.s

The table below shows a trend in the decrease in the number of S.I.s as time passed.

Month	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May
Number of serious incidents	8	1	7	4	2	0	0
Other factors to be taken into account		Includin g 2 week break for Christ mas		Includin g 1 week break – ½ term		Includin g 2 week break for Easter	

Table 5. Number of serious incidents each month during the research period.

However, other factors may well have had an effect upon the results that were not included in the research project. For example, home circumstances, time of year (as time progressed the days were longer, with more opportunity to play outside), planned class holiday to a country cottage (children who engage in S.I.s are banned). These reasons, and possibly others I have not considered, play a part in encouraging the children to keep the school rules.

In addition, this data is limited since the sample of children used was small.

A.3. Interviews with children, re: their serious incidents

There were 3 occasions when I chose not to do an interview, believing that the child was not ready for this. He was new and avoided such discussions. 18 interviews were started. Of these, 3 were abandoned due to the children not responding. Therefore, a total of 15 interviews were completed.

Below is a breakdown of the number of interviews each child engaged in.

Child	Year group	Number of interviews (where responded to 2 or more questions).
Alex	4	3
Ryan	4	0
Paul	4	0
Michael	3	5
Chris	3	0
Matt	2	4
David	2	3

Table 6. Number of interviews administered where children answered 2 or more questions.

A.3.1. Apparent increase in children's responses about their serious incidents.

Matt had the most difficulty in discussing his S.I.s. He offered very little information in any of his interviews. However, as the other children gained more experience of being interviewed, they tended to offer more comments. David's progress can be seen in appendices 12.1-12.3. His replies are discussed in more detail below.

Whilst this is a small sample, the trend in increased communication between staff and children is in itself a positive start to empowering children to give their views and perceptions in a socially accepted way.

The apparent increase in giving of children's views as the work progressed (whether due to the interventions of this research or otherwise), (appendices 12.1-12.7), could have been at least a part of the reason for the reduction in the number of S.I.s at the end of the research period.

I give below the children's responses to the interview questions.

A.3.2. Children's views about their serious incidents

On David's first interview, he replied to the question 'Tell me what happened' with "I won't do it again" (appendix 12.1) and looked very sad. He could not or would not answer the question. I did not attempt to interview him on his next three S.I.s since I believed that he would again be unwilling or unable to reply. His fifth S.I. involved David refusing to get out of the swimming baths and scratching Ryan when Ryan tried to assist. I chose to interview him on this occasion because I believed he could give more replies after knowing other children had done the same. Moreover, David had experienced more of the lessons designed to encourage expressing views, and so could have improved his skills in this area. David attempted to answer on this fifth occasion, saying "splashing and Ryan got me out", (appendix 12.2). Although this reply is very brief, it does appear to show that David is able to discuss at least a part of the incident.

His subsequent replies were again brief, but contained some details of his behaviour e.g. "I had been nasty to people, hurting people's feelings", (appendix 12.3). This was in reference to David provoking another boy in class, and then David attempting to physically hurt him. Staff had to intervene to avoid this. Later still, David replied to this question with "I was throwing blocks and hurting people with it". This is a clear description of his actions. David appears to show that he has made improvements in his ability and/or motivation to discuss his past misdemeanors. Such improvements may well be due to the lessons he has engaged in, and/or his experiences of discussing such behaviours. It could be argued that the replies were simple and aimed to please me. In David's case, he is possibly performing at stage 2 of Kohlberg's (1969) moral development, i.e. pre-conventional morality – naïve egoism. However, David may also be learning to reflect on his past inappropriate behaviours, albeit at a basic level.

Replies from other children contained a description of their problem behaviour. Many answers were quite concise, e.g. Michael replied "I was kicking staff and

I got restrained”, (appendix 12.5). Later, Michael replied to this same question about another S.I. with “‘cos David was swearing at me.. (*pause*)..and I wanted..(*pause*)..just stop. ‘Cos I didn’t wanted David to swear at me”. Here Michael is telling the reason he became angry, i.e. David was swearing at him, rather than stating what Michael actually did. Similarly, Alex was very clear about the antecedent to his S.I. He said “David tried to get me into trouble. He said I was threatening to punch him. I started reading. Ryan told me to ‘Shut up’”. It was exactly at this point, i.e. Ryan telling Alex to “Shut up”, when Alex became aggressive. However, Alex did not state what happened next, i.e. Alex’s actions. This is in contrast to David and Michael who did state their problem behaviour (i.e. “I was throwing blocks” and “I was kicking staff” respectively). In a subsequent interview Alex said he “just felt angry because I hadn’t felt angry for ages.....I felt angry because I tried to hold it in”. Again Alex stopped short of describing his actual behaviours, but he appears to recognise that ‘bottling up’ his anger could have lead to his aggression. This has been described by Faupel *et al.* (1998).

These examples are showing that children are able to tell us what they have done. This could then be used to help them to reflect upon their own behaviour, with a view to improving it. Similarly, the children can tell us what made them angry in the first place. Such replies could be of use to staff when dealing with similar behaviours in the future.

Of the 15 completed interviews, there were 5 times when the child actually stated his exact behaviour, e.g. “I was kicking staff and I got restrained” (Michael). There were 3 other times when the children did not state exactly what they had done, but gave a general answer, e.g. “I kicked off and I needed to do lines” (Matt). The other 7 times the children gave replies that did not state their undertaking in the S.I., e.g. “I was upset. Someone made me angry” (Michael). However, the fact that there were times when the children could/would not discuss their own wrongdoing, this did not have an effect upon

the individuals answering later questions in the interview. This suggests that, providing checks are initially made to ensure that the child is referring to the relevant S.I., they do not necessarily have to state their actions. They may be avoiding feelings of embarrassment, humiliation, regret, etc. Indeed, such feelings could lead to the child engaging in another S.I. The fact that the interviews could still continue, even if the child did not go into detail about their wrongdoings, shows that these children are capable of moving forward without in depth discussions about their past behaviours. This is possibly contrary to some people's views that a child is more likely to move forward after clearly stating their actions. Instead they may benefit from inwardly reflecting on their behaviour without the need for discussion. This is further demonstrated in that out of the 15 completed interviews, the children gave 11 simple suggestions of how they or someone else could avoid a similar S.I. incident in the future. Perhaps the children are more likely to reflect upon and discuss 'what could have been' rather than 'what was'.

The next question deals with what the children thought staff could have done to avoid a S.I.

A.3.3. What children thought staff could have done to avoid this serious incident.

Of those who replied to this question, there were various answers given. Michael said "You (staff) should take me out of the room to calm down – away from Ryan – like the ICT room". Michael likes being in the ICT room so this appears a reasonable comment. In his next S.I. he said staff could help him avoid a S.I. by letting him have freetime, i.e. avoid work activities. This comment is controversial. Should staff allow a child to do a more preferred activity, e.g. freetime in place of lessons, in order to avoid the child having a S.I.?

Another suggestion Michael gave related to his S.I. in P.E. He had run around the hall when told not to because we had the gym equipment out. Michael said staff should “let us run”. I explained in the interview that this could not happen because it was not safe with the other gym equipment out. Michael then said “If we took some things out of the P.E. lesson, (i.e. put some gym equipment away), then we could run”, i.e. he could run in a particular allotted space. This appeared a fair compromise. I agreed that this was what we would do in the next lesson. Since then, we have not had any problems with Michael in P.E. He enjoys telling people how he avoids problems in P.E. due to his own idea. I believe that this incident, and the consequent interview, have made Michael feel some empowerment over his own behaviour. His views were listened to and acted upon. This resulted in him acting in a safer way during P.E. lessons.

Although Matt gave few replies to questions about his own actions, he answered how staff could help him. Perhaps this is because he is telling staff where we have ‘gone wrong’ rather than discussing his own ‘mistakes’. Matt said that we could help him by “Just make me sit on a chair to be calm”. His incident started at home time. Matt had nearly had a negative consequence, but managed to avoid this. It is possible that Matt believed he had invoked a negative consequence. His Mum arrived to take him home, but Matt appeared reluctant to see Mum. This could be because we tell her of his behaviour in school at the end of the day. Matt started to move further away from staff, looking very apprehensive. We were concerned that he would run around the school throwing objects (as has happened in the past). The assistant used a 1 person escort (appendix 13.1), but Matt pulled away and I had to assist. We now used a 2 person escort (appendix 13.2). Matt became very aggressive and kicked at our legs so we then used a personal intervention (P.I.), (appendix 13.3). In his interview Matt said “Just make me sit on a chair to be calm”. This had all happened very quickly and indeed Matt was not asked to sit on a chair. I assured Matt that he would be given the opportunity to sit on a chair if he was in a similar position again. (This strategy was used at a later date, but Matt did

not sit on the chair and needed another P.I.). When he was asked what staff could have done to help at this subsequent time he said “I wish you didn’t hold me”. He could or would not offer anything more.

When David was asked what staff could do to help him avoid his S.I. at the baths he replied “Get me out of baths in case I drown”. Although David was a non-swimmer at the time, he was in the shallow end and I was not aware of him feeling afraid e.g. of drowning. This could be because I had misunderstood his behaviour. His anxiety could have led him to a ‘fear response’, as written by Dadds and Salmon (2003), although he had appeared very happy during the lesson. At the end of the interview he was asked if he would like to add anything further. David replied “In case I drown”. Perhaps he was considering the safety aspect and was holding onto this line of thought, i.e. staff are there to save him from drowning. David’s father and staff had emphasised the safety aspect of not following instructions whilst at the baths. Such adult emphasis could have led him to repeating this safety aspect to show that he had listened to our comments. In his next two interviews David said staff could help him to avoid hurting someone by us holding him. This is very different from Matt who wanted to avoid a P.I. David reiterated this when I asked him what staff could do in the future to avoid him hurting someone. David answered “Hold me”. Perhaps David is learning that when staff use a P.I. there is less chance of him hurting someone, with the subsequent negative consequence, e.g. school suspension. Whilst this is an important point, children may come to believe that they cannot control themselves, so someone must do it for them. Perhaps this is a stage of development that children go through, albeit usually at a much younger age, i.e. the temper tantrums of 2 and 3 year olds. Lowe (1972) states that 2-5 year olds have ‘battles’ which cause the child to feel anger and fear. Faupel *et al.* (1998) and Sage (2002) claim that children’s lack of adequate language necessary to communicate needs leads to temper tantrums/aggression. David and Matt are both older than the ages given by both Lowe and Faupel *et al.* for such aggressive behaviour. However, their displays of aggression could

show that both children are at a lower stage of social and emotional developmental than their age would suggest. This has implications in supporting such development.

The seeking of assistance from peers is considered next.

A.3.4. How children thought a peer could have helped them to avoid a serious incident

There were only 8 responses here. One of these responses includes Matt's reply of "No children were around", which was factual.

David said that a child could have helped him to get out of the baths. This actually occurred, but David scratched the child who attempted to assist. Perhaps David wanted a different type of help. He was unable or unwilling to continue this. Perhaps David was confusing reality with what was wished for, but was unable or unwilling to state what he exactly wished for. As noted by Lowe (1972) children do tend to blur the distinction between fact and desire.

Michael said a child could help him by not being "nasty" to him. In other words, the boy who had annoyed him could be the one to help him by not annoying him. This is a simplistic reply, yet it is valid. This may also show that Michael does not recognise that whilst one child may be annoying him, a different child could be one to help him. Similarly, Alex said that the two boys who had annoyed him could have said "Sorry". Another view is that Michael and Alex could be indicating that they prefer to deal directly with an annoying peer rather than relying on intermediaries. In a later interview, Alex said that other children could have helped him by them offering to play with him when he was annoyed. (Alex was annoyed because the ball he had was flat and so no good for bouncing). Michael also later said that other children could "help me stop running and help me stay on a bench" when he ran in a P.E. lesson. Alex's answer was of more relevance since the suggestion of playing with other children could well have diverted his anger. At least he would have had a better

ball (i.e. theirs) to play with. Michael's answer is of less relevance since Michael does not say exactly how the children could have stopped him running, or how they could make him sit on a bench.

The low question response here, and even lower relevance of the replies, suggest that these children could benefit from understanding how their peers can be of use when they are beginning to feel annoyed. It would appear to be of use in special schools, where classes are small, but could be of more pertinence in mainstream schools, where the ratio of pupils to teachers is much higher. The availability of more peers could be of great benefit, if only the children had the skills and 'emotional intelligence' to do this.

The next question deals with how staff could help to avoid a S.I. in the future.

A.3.5. Children's views on how staff could support them in the future to avoid a serious incident

David said staff could "Get me out" (of the water) when referring to his S.I. at the swimming baths mentioned earlier. This was in fact, the reality. In a later interview (about a different S.I.) he said he would "Tell the teacher". This could be due to staff and his father advising him to seek adult help when necessary. Unfortunately, David could be like many children who appear to know of this strategy, but do not use it. Reasons for this, could be a belief that the teacher cannot/will not help, unavailability of the teacher at that time, (this is more likely in a mainstream school where there are far more children per teacher), and so on.

Alex said his problem was due to David swearing at him and that staff could help by not allowing David to sit by him. This is a practical solution that could be easily applied, but there are other times when these children sit by each other happily. This is a common dilemma for teachers, i.e. when to sit and not sit certain children together. Do friendships help or hinder learning?

In another interview relating to another S.I., Alex gave another practical reply to how staff could avoid a similar incident occurring in the future. Alex had become aggressive because he was annoyed that the ball he had been given to play with was flat and did not bounce. This spoilt his hard earned freetime. He said that staff could have used the ball pump to put more air into the ball. Scarlett and Myers (1998) have written how the giving of poor resources can lead to problem behaviour. Alex became frustrated, and then aggressive. Clearly Alex is correct here. Staff have a part to play in ensuring that children are not given such poor resources.

Michael said that staff could help by giving him computers. This issue was raised earlier, i.e. should staff allow a child to do something else in order to avoid them becoming angry – including swapping a lesson for freetime? One problem is that this could lead to a child manipulating an adult to achieve their own goals, e.g. “I will be good if you let me play with a computer instead of doing a lesson”. Michael may have had this in mind. On the other hand, there are times when staff can successfully accommodate children’s wishes, e.g. allowing Michael a designated area to run around in during P.E. Possibly, Michael learned that his views will be listened to and acted upon *if* appropriate. When children’s expressed views are not acted upon, I argue that it is imperative that children are given the reasons why this is so. The child may be more likely to accept an adult’s decision if they know the reasons why. Although this emphasises that adults have more power than the child, it can be shown that child’s wider needs are being met, e.g. having an education, which is of ultimate benefit to themselves.

The acceptance of others being in power could be an important step in these children’s (i.e. those identified as having EBSD) development. It is widely accepted that people have authority figures, e.g. line manager at work, police. When our children first attend our school they usually reject authority figures,

and attempt to use their power over staff, e.g. by intimidation and physical violence. These children need to recognise that authority figures are for the benefit of all, hence Kohlberg's (1969) fourth stage of development, i.e. 'authority maintaining orientation', where they maintain the given social order.

Matt repeated that staff could help him if they did "not hold me". Should staff not use a P.I., and hence allow children to hurt others? Matt was clearly stating that we should not use a P.I. Train (1993) made it clear that we should control a child who cannot or will not control himself. Train takes the view that if we do not control a child's 'raging emotions', then we are guilty of abusing the child. An aggressive child needs support to stop him from suffering the subsequent negative consequences of suspension from school, remorse, etc. P.I.s can be distressing for all concerned, including witnesses. This can be at least partly avoided by staff appearing calm, confident and 'in control'. This is emphasised in training programmes such as SCIPr - UK (1998).

I now turn to the staff views of the S.I.s they witnessed or partook in.

A.4. Staff views re: serious incidents

The response rate for completed staff serious incident form (for the purposes of this research), and questionnaire was 100%, (see appendices 14 and 15 for sample of completed serious incident form and questionnaire respectively). Staff sometimes took the opportunity to discuss their questionnaire further when they wished. Most of this was to reassure that they were completing them correctly and that their views were important.

I found that my views of the S.I.s are almost identical to those of the other staff. This could be because we have a shared view of the children and system involved. It may also mean that we are not considering other viewpoints, and so possibly not serving the children as well as we could. Seeking children's viewpoints could help to verify (or otherwise) those of the staff.

So far, this chapter has examined the viewpoints of staff and children about S.I.s they were engaged in. It was vital that the children could verbally express themselves as much as possible. Therefore, this research included the teaching of such skills. This is considered in the next section.

B.i. Problem intervention - phase 1, special school.

This section examines the lessons taught to develop the children's skills in communication, and the issues that arose from this, including the children's comments about which lessons they said they learnt the most from. Finally, I consider the children's self-assessment sheets that were administered at the beginning and end of the research period.

B.1. Teaching of personal and social education

The lessons consisted of various activities designed to develop skills of communication, including encouraging the children to discuss their own emotions and views. Whilst I did not use a scheme of work, and this led to a lack of cohesion between the lessons, this did ensure that the children were motivated for most of the time. During these times we used discussions, pictures, role play and stories. Whilst children could discuss how a fictional character could or should have acted, the majority of the children preferred to discuss themselves and real life incidents. This could be because the children felt secure with the staff.

I had to ensure that all who wanted to could offer their own comments. Ryan and Alex were in danger of dominating the others, allowing little 'thinking' time for those who needed it. The lesson observations show that as time progressed David and Matt offered more comments. (See appendices 16.1 and 16.2 respectively for sample of earlier and later lessons observations respectively). Whilst this research project may have had an influence on the increase in comments offered, other factors must also be taken into account. The children may have made developments in their language ability due to

maturational processes. They may have increased in self-esteem through feeling some empowerment after taking part in this research. This could have given them more motivation to speak out. Also, some lessons were more likely to encourage a child to speak, depending upon the interests and state of mind of the particular child at that time. When encouraged, the more able children (i.e. those with more confidence and/or more verbal skills and joined in lessons more) gave the less able children (i.e. those who contributed less in the lesson) more time to think and speak. This appeared to become easier as the less able became more confident and/or more competent and so made more relevant and important comments.

The major themes that have emerged from the teaching of the lessons will now be discussed.

B.2. Teaching the difference between aggressive and assertive behaviour

Initially, the lessons demonstrated that most of the children had difficulties recognising if specific responses were assertive or aggressive. (Some adults may experience similar difficulties). It appeared that the children were perceiving that if they were not aggressive then they must be passive. Responding in a non-aggressive way was probably interpreted by some as e.g. allowing a bully to continue. Some parents expressed this view, with one saying that if their child was hit, then he should hit back, otherwise he would be viewed as a 'wimp'. Schools cannot condone using physical aggression under any circumstances. This is possibly an insight into different expectations of behaviours in different environments.

To overcome the problem of separating assertion from aggression I took opportunities throughout the day to emphasise how to respond in an assertive way rather than an aggressive way. This involved me modelling to the children how they should respond. Such 'teaching moments' appeared to have had some success. This was particularly so for David, one of the youngest and least able. He tended to respond to children and adults in an aggressive way if they did not

do as he wished. At first he learned to control some of this aggression because he really wanted the usual class rewards for following rules and avoiding the consequences. This is of concern since he may have been ‘bottling up’ his anger, with the possible associated negative impact, e.g. the anger builds up rather than diminishes, (Faupel *et al.* 1998). David then appeared to substitute his behaviour by crying bitterly. This could be viewed as an acceptable alternative behaviour in place of aggression. Unfortunately, if he *believed* anyone was laughing at him because he was crying, he found it very difficult to then avoid being aggressive. The merest sound would make him think someone was laughing. He possibly needed to develop his ‘emotional resilience’, so that such responses from other children would not be of such great significance.

When I modelled e.g. how to tell another child to stop annoying him (e.g. to stop someone singing), I used an assertive voice and said “Stop singing please”, David was able to copy this. When he used this strategy and the child who was annoying him stopped, David laughed. (The other child may have stopped annoying David because he knew that I would intervene if he didn’t. However, the point is that he stopped, and David was unlikely to consider the motives of the other child.). Similar incidents have occurred with David using his ‘assertive’ voice and the children knowing that they must stop or have staff intervention. At one time David told Chris “Stop singing please” and Chris replied with “Sorry”. This was an amusement to David who promptly said “It doesn’t matter. You can sing”. David has since had very similar incidents, where he has assertively asked someone to stop doing something that has annoyed him, and the other child has responded in a positive way, e.g. the other child stopped doing the singing. I believe that David felt empowered enough to realize that the ‘problem’ was not so great, and that he could withstand it. This is similar to Greenhalgh’s (1994) ‘projection’ as written in the literature review. Here, David had negative emotions due to a child annoying him. In the past, David would have probably hit the other boy, thereby pushing his own negative emotions onto someone else. Staff have demonstrated to David that

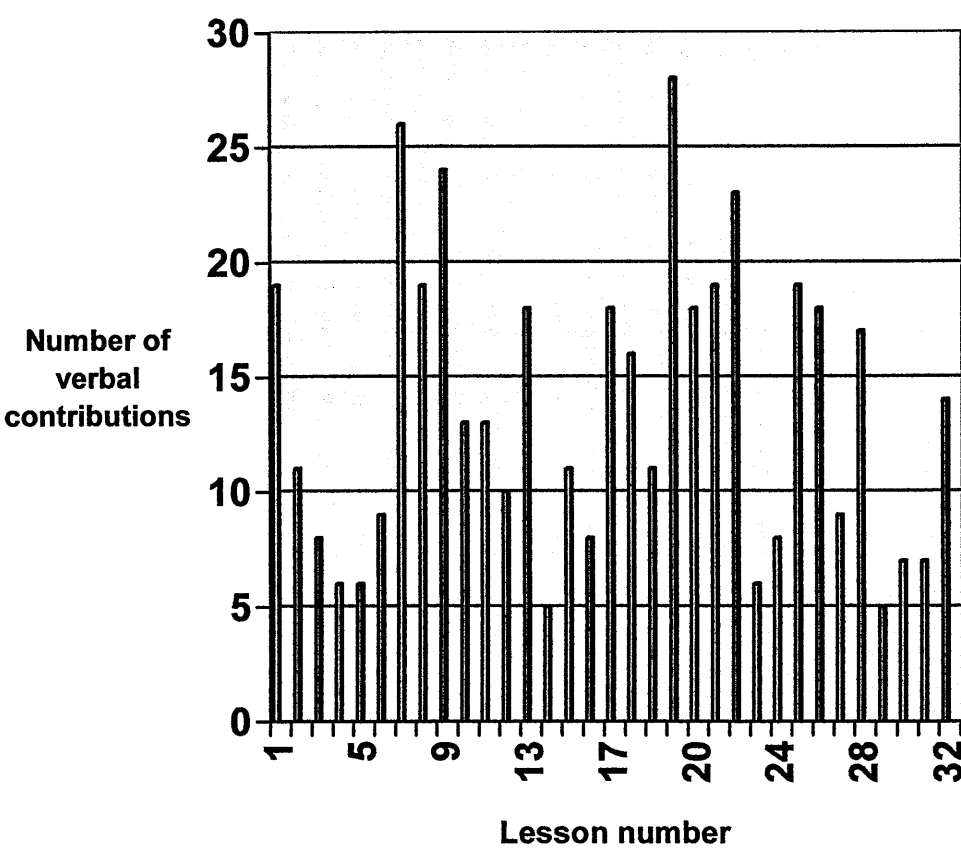
these feelings can be endured, and that he can progress to empower himself to deal directly with the problem in an assertive, but sociable way.

Having discussed the content of the children's comments in the lessons, I will now examine the amount and type of comments made by the children.

B.3. Responses from children during lessons

I wished to examine the children's comments made during the lessons to ascertain if they made more verbal contributions as time progressed. The data appears to show that the children's number of verbal contributions in lessons did not make any significant changes during the teaching of the lessons.

**Total number of verbal contriubtions
made by children in each lesson**



Graph 1.Total number of verbal contributions made by children in each lesson

I then broke this data down into two parts, i.e. general verbal contributions made by the children, and verbal contributions regarding personal information volunteered by the children. It could have been enlightening if the children had engaged in more personal comments about themselves, since this research is attempting to elicit such views. However, no evidence for this was found.

It is probable that the changes in the number of comments between lessons depended upon the content of the lesson, i.e. some lessons were open to more discussion than others. It must be noted that the data here is limited. The counting of 'verbal contributions' does not take other factors into account, e.g. length or relevance of contribution. Anecdotal evidence appears to show that the younger children used longer and more personal contributions as time progressed. In the initial lessons, the children would respond to my questions and comments with short phrases, e.g. when the children were asked why they think the boy in the picture looks worried their responses included "His Nan's going to die" (Matt), "His Nan is ill and might die (Ryan), "He worries his Mum might die (Alex), "When his baby brother dies" (Michael). When one child stated that the fictional boy was grieving over a death, the other children continued with this theme. Answers were appropriate, but tended to be short and to the point. In later lessons the children tended to offer more contributions, particularly referring to issues related to themselves. Caution must be exercised here since it must be noted that the children's length of contributions, and their contents, have probably been influenced by the lesson content. If the children have more interest in the content, they are more likely to offer contributions. It does not necessarily mean that the lesson has developed their language skills.

Discussions about stories or incidents that the children could relate to were popular with the children. After a story about a boy losing his temper Michael gave a longer talk about when he "lost" his anger (see appendix 16.2). This occurred at home because his Mum wouldn't let him go to the park. He told us he became so angry he made himself sick, and, unprompted, gave us a mime of him showing anger and then being sick. Paul described how he felt on his first days with us. On his first day at our school he attempted to assault staff, so we used a P.I. Paul told us he was angry because he didn't want to come to school and was scared. Ryan told us about him trashing his bedroom because his sister had been picking on him. Chris spoke softly of his Dad suddenly leaving home and how he was angry with his Dad for doing this. He ran to his bedroom door

but was unable to open the door. This made him more angry. David has contributed the least to these discussions, possibly due to lack of ability and/or motivation. However, at this time, when the children were discussing very private moments David tried to join in too. He said "I was angry when you held me down". David looked at me directly when he said this, then looked away. I encouraged him to continue, but he would then only discuss a different incident when he became angry whilst playing with friends at home. It is possible that David, who now has a good relationship with me, suddenly felt uncomfortable discussing a time when he had physically hurt me and a P.I. was used. During this lesson (number 29) the children listened to each other and spoke for relatively long periods of time. It is possible that the children had these skills before this research was started but did not or could not use them. The content of the lessons could also have some influence on how much the children spoke. For instance, the lessons that involved the children listening to a story, and then discussing either the characters in the story or themselves, appear to have been quite successful in encouraging the children to make some comments. However, these lessons were taught towards the end of the research period, and so may not have been so successful initially if we assume that the children did not have such developed language skills at that time. The point to be made is that after either learning new skills, or specific encouragement to use these skills, the children were able to express their emotions in some detail. This apparent increase in language could have been a factor in the decrease in number of S.I.s over the research period. This links with Sage's (2002) view, where she emphasises the need to develop formal language and thinking, and that doing so will enhance the performance of able and less able children. Children may indeed be able to learn how to 'negotiate themselves out of their troubles', (Sage *ibid*).

As an onlooker I felt privileged to be a part of this. This gave me further insights into the lives of these children that I felt had not previously been available to me.

B.4. Stages of moral development

Michael has had five aggressive incidents and five interviews about these. At the end of the interview, I asked if there was anything he would like to add. On the first interview he answered with no reply, then in consecutive order, “Next time I’ll be good”, then “No” and on the final two interviews replied “No thank you”. With the exception of “Next time I’ll be good”, he used a ‘resigned’ voice when saying these. This possibly shows that Michael is seeing these interviews as ways of helping himself to deal with his behaviour. On the other hand, Michael could be responding in a way he thinks that I want him to. It could be that Michael is relying on forces other than himself to behave in a more sociable way, (i.e. the teacher’s impact is encouraging him to be ‘good’ rather than his own desire to do so). He is possibly not yet empowered enough to be ‘good’ for his own sake. In terms of Kohlberg’s (1969) stages of moral development, it appears that Michael is at stage 2, i.e. pre-conventional morality – naïve egoism. Here, according to Kohlberg, the child appears to meet the needs of others, but this is because the child seeks a result favourable to himself. The next stage in this hierarchy of development is ‘good boy/girl orientation’. Here the child seeks approval and to please others. This generalises to different situations, leading to acquiring a concept of the ‘good’ child. Michael could well be leading to this next stage of moral development. When Michael was asked if he regretted anything he said “Nothing..... I wish I didn’t be naughty. You had to hold me on the floor”. On another occasion he replied “I wish I could have gone to play again” (His consequence for having a S.I. was not to use the gym equipment). Another time he said “I didn’t like the bit where I got held”. This perhaps demonstrates that he regretted the negative consequences more than he regretted his dangerous behaviour. In Kohlberg’s stages of moral development, Michael appears here to be at stage 1, i.e. obedience through no real moral sense, but responds to simple reinforcement. However, Michael’s incident first discussed shows that Michael was operating within at least stage 2, (i.e. naïve egoism) if not stage 3 (good boy/girl orientation.). This perhaps shows that children do not progress along a simple

developmental path, but make twists and turns. This was identified by Kohlberg, since his stages of moral development are split into pre-conventional morality (approximate ages 2-7 years) and conventional morality (approximate ages 2-11). The overlap in approximate ages between the two perhaps makes allowance for children to move forward and backwards.

David gave similar replies, probably demonstrating that he is also at the same stage as Michael. David had refused to come out of the swimming baths. When David was interviewed and asked “Is there something you wish did not happen?” he replied “Didn’t have basket ball” (see appendix 12.2), referring to the consequence of not being allowed basketball, i.e. his regret was for the consequence, not for his inappropriate behaviour or pain caused. David had another S.I. shortly afterwards. He said he regretted “I didn’t have the roamer” (floor turtle). Again this meant that he regretted the negative consequence (time with the floor turtle) rather than hurting others. This regret for the consequence rather than for the action is probably very common, particularly in young children. It is probable that David and Michael (ages 7 and 8 years respectively) were responding as a younger child would. According to Kohlberg’s stages of moral development, they should now be heading towards stage 3. One may even expect an older or more able child to lie in order to avoid admitting how much the consequence hurt and to show some ‘pretend’ remorse for their actions since this is generally socially acceptable. David did express some remorse for the others at the end of the interview. The S.I. involved David thrusting cubes about, hurting children’s hands. He then pushed a plastic toy into the arm of an assistant. In this interview he did admit his wrongdoing, saying “I had been nasty to people, hurting people’s feelings”, (see appendix 12.3) and “I was throwing blocks and hurting people with it”. At the end of the interview he added that he “wished they (the children and possibly, the member of staff) didn’t get hurt”.

An older and more able child, Alex, was also asked the same question of if he regretted anything, and replied with “I didn’t slam the door and nearly hurt Paul”. Both Alex and David were possibly speaking genuinely, i.e. they really did regret their behaviour. However, it could be for the reason stated above, i.e. to show remorse, even if they don’t feel it, since it’s the accepted thing to do in many social situations. This also links with Kohlberg’s fourth stage of moral development, i.e. ‘Authority maintaining orientation’. Here, the children are showing some respect for authority, by expressing regret for what they had done and by now maintaining the given social order. They could also have been hoping that by saying these socially appropriate words, that they could ‘wipe the slate’ and so start anew. This latter perspective of wanting to ‘wipe the slate’ is less likely since both Alex and David had already received their consequences before the interviews took place. However, this needs to be kept in mind.

B.5. Use of vocabulary

Whilst the children used a wider vocabulary of emotions during the course of the lessons, they still questioned or ‘tested out’ new words or phrases. Michael used the word ‘guilty’ to describe his own feelings about someone else’s behaviour, but there was no clear reason as to why he would feel guilty. Matt frequently used the word ‘misunderstood’ incorrectly. The process of learning new words can involve ‘trial and error’ before full mastery is obtained, as in learning other skills, e.g. reading and writing.

Alex was asked to describe how people must be feeling from looking at drawings of them. Alex used the word ‘*discheerful*’. In the following lesson he used the word ‘*disconfident*’ to describe someone who was not feeling confident. This use of the prefix ‘dis’ is rather unusual. However, it does show that Alex is considering new vocabulary for emotions. It appears that the children’s use of vocabulary raises issues about the teaching of such skills. It is

possible that children do not know which words are appropriate in school. The issue of swearing follows.

B.5.1. Swearing

Both Chris and David used swear words when they were admitted to our school. This occurred whether they were angry or not. The other children and myself have told David not to use these words and he does try not to. David now asks if it is OK to use a specific word. These words include swear words and other words, e.g. 'stupid' and 'daft'. This shows that he may not have known which words were appropriate in school or otherwise. Although Chris had a similar problem, we did not target his behaviour as specifically as we had with David. This was because we believed that Chris was more 'fragile' (as emphasised by Train 1993,) or was less 'emotionally resilient'. Unlike David, he spoke little in class. We were concerned that if we complained about Chris's choice of words he may stop speaking altogether. He may also use defence mechanisms, (Sproson 1992), to avoid losing face in the light of any criticism. So, instead of drawing attention to this, we repeated his phrases substituting his swear words with more 'school' acceptable words. This has led to Chris using far fewer swear words, yet we have never discussed this openly with him.

It is possible that teachers may be unaware that some children genuinely do not know which words are appropriate or inappropriate in school. A teacher may have to specifically teach a child which words are acceptable or not (as with David). The giving of punishments for an unintentional act (e.g. swearing without realising it) could be very detrimental. Swearing could be a response to anxiety brought on by, e.g. speaking in front of the class. As written by Dadds and Salmon (2003) punishing an anxiety response will not reduce those behaviours, but could increase them. Hence the need for staff to hypothesise on why the child is acting as such, as recommended by Greenhalgh (1994). The hypothesis, along with an examination of the child's 'emotional state' will then

influence the way the adult responds to the child, e.g. openly discuss using swear words or modeling 'acceptable' words.

It is clear from the above that the children were able to join in the lessons, and respond to the set activities. There were also a few times when the children diverted from the set topic, and discussed things that were important to them. These chosen topics were a mixture of experiences in mainstream schools and bullying. This will now be discussed.

B.6. Discussion of mainstream school

Usually, the children had joined in discussions with me being 'leader'. In this instance, the children brought up the topic of mainstream school themselves. The children led the discussions themselves, with myself as a facilitator. (As they did whilst discussing other private moments). Chris brought up the subject first. The lesson was about body language, with a link to our list of 'feelings vocabulary' used in previous lessons. Chris was to tell us how a person in a picture was feeling and give a possible reason why. The picture was of an angry man (see appendix 17). Chris has told us of very negative experiences in his past mainstream school. (When his Mum was interviewed she told me of staff shouting at him and "pulling him about" at mainstream school). Chris interpreted the picture as a teacher who is angry, saying "like my teacher who said "Pick that up now". When he quoted the teacher he shouted out the words. Chris looked downcast and angry. He explained how his teacher at mainstream school had shouted at him to pick up some rubbish. He believed that this was not fair because he had not dropped the litter. He concluded with "I felt like getting the police to him". It was stated in the literature review that Hornby *et al.* (1997) believe that a relatively minor incident can lead to a child being excluded. Although Hornby *et al.* note that interpretations are subjective, one can see here how strongly Chris still feels about something that happened some months earlier in a school that he now does not attend. Such strong negative

emotions could lead to frustration and aggression. Chris has expressed his view that he does not wish to return to his previous mainstream school. Such a view runs contrary to the opinion that children identified as having EBDS should remain on role at their mainstream school when attending a special school or unit, and then return to their original placement when ready. This appears to adopt the 'medical model' of the child, where the child's within problems are solved, so now he can return to the former mainstream environment. Insofar as Barnes *et al.* (1984) write, "There is every likelihood that a return to former situations will lead to a return to former behaviour" p235 they stress the need for transferring some of the 'new circumstances' along with the pupil. This is in accordance with adopting the social model to bring about changes in children's behaviour.

In a later lesson we were discussing feeling 'left out' and how to join in with other children when feeling like this. Alex claimed that he had asked two boys at his old mainstream school if he could play with them, and they said "Yes". Ryan, an apparently confident boy, responded with "I couldn't do that!", meaning that this was a difficult thing to do. Matt immediately agreed. Chris, who is shy with newcomers, said that he had asked some children at his past mainstream school if he could play football with them, and they said "Yes". Chris finished with "I was pleased". This showed a positive side of his mainstream school and evidence of some confidence. It is possible that in this scenario Chris gave us more that was wished for than actual truth. However, it does show that Chris can put his mainstream experiences in a positive light, unlike the comments he made above. Even more pleasing is that an older and apparently more confident boy (Ryan) had just said how he could never have asked unknown children if he could join in with them. Chris clearly looked pleased that he could do something that Ryan could not. This instance would help to develop Chris' apparently weak 'emotional resilience'.

After this conversation, Paul told us about his worries about his first day at our school. He then said “I didn’t feel left out because Steve, (an older boy from another group), Alex and Ryan all made me welcome. I thought people might be mean”. He then continued, saying how the children at his mainstream school were playing cricket, but they wouldn’t let him join in. Paul had told us of his friends in our school. His parents have confirmed that he did not have friends earlier, but that he feels that he does so now. Alex said “At mainstream they just bully you”. Paul quickly responded with “At mainstream they are bigger groups and here (i.e. special school) the teachers can see if people are being bullied” (Paul’s parents have told me of Paul suffering badly at the hands of bullies in his mainstream school). Perhaps Alex is recognising the ‘safer environment’ of a special school, (Preece and Timmins 2004). I now joined in the conversation, stating how teachers have a more difficult job in mainstream to keep an eye on everyone, since the classes are much larger. This is why it is necessary for children to discuss their problems with someone who will be able to assist them. Ryan leant back in his chair and said “Even if this school there were thirty kids, staff here would still see everything, but they don’t at mainstream”. He continued with this, claiming that teachers at mainstream just sit back in their chairs and drink coffee, not taking any notice of what the children are doing. Ryan has bullied children both in mainstream and at our school. This is now largely under control but he still needs a close eye on him to ensure that such behaviour is not repeated. I believe that he is aware of my attention and that this is preventing him from upsetting others. Perhaps he remembers when staff at his mainstream school could not or would not keep him under such close scrutiny.

The issue of bullying was brought up by the children in other lessons. This will be discussed below.

B.7. Bullying

In lesson no. 9 we discussed looking ahead – hopes and fears. The lesson went as planned. I then asked the children to let me know of times they were worried. Ryan, who likes to be the leader of the others (sometimes by bullying), said he was worried about Dean, a year 6 boy in the next group. Dean is older, larger and stronger than any of the children in our group. He needs careful observation to ensure that he does not bully others. I was surprised that Ryan would admit that he had some fear of another child. Alex joined in the conversation, and as before, they continued the discussion as a group, with me acting as facilitator rather than leader. Alex said he was worried that he may accidentally knock Dean and that Dean would then “really hurt you”. Others in the group agreed that they were worried about Dean’s size and strength. I assured the children that they must seek help from adults if they are bullied by Dean, and that this can be done in private. However, Ryan and Alex both said that they would not tell anyone because this could lead to being bullied even more. This highlights the need for staff to be continually vigilant in supervising children and to do so in a subtle way. These comments from Ryan do not tie in with his later comments in lesson 18, as written above, where Ryan stated that in our school teachers “see everything”. It could be that Ryan, in lesson 18 was referring to just our group and not children or staff in another room. It is also possible that Ryan’s confidence in staff had increased between lesson 9 and 18. It is clear that even the apparently confident children are prepared to put up with being bullied rather than seek help due to possible risks of further bullying. Staff cannot “see everything”. I was shocked since I believed that the children felt safe in my class. I had not known how much these apparently confident boys feared Dean. They did not want to be involved in sorting out this issue. Instead, they preferred to leave things as they were. They did not want me, the assistant, or other staff to intervene. I told them that I wanted to mention this to other staff. They agreed, but were adamant that we should not speak with Dean. I found this very difficult from an ethical point of view. Should I break their trust, or allow bullying to continue? In a staff meeting we agreed not to speak

with Dean, but planned that Dean should not be allowed to be with other children unless with an adult. In a small school it is easier to provide a 'safer environment' that, as highlighted by Preece and Timmins' (2004) is beneficial to these children.

B.8. Generalisation of skills learned

Ryan used his previous learning to support David when David was about to lose his temper. Ryan used the analogy of a firework with a long fuse. When the fuse burns to the end, the firework explodes, similar to a person becoming angry, and then 'exploding'. Ryan told David to ensure David had a long 'fuse', so that he would not 'explode'. Later, I read the story of *The Selfish Giant*, by Oscar Wilde (1995), Michael described the giant as having a short fuse on his firework when he saw the children playing in his garden without permission. David agreed. This demonstrates that peers can support each other. It also showed me a lesson that had had a positive impact on Ryan. This was something he did not explain during the group interview.

There were other times when a child 'taught' another boy skills he learned from previous lessons. More details are given below.

B.8.1. Peer tutoring

Once, David became very excited when telling us of something nice that had happened at home. David's speech became very loud and unintelligible. He made mistakes and repeated words in his excitement. Ryan reminded David of a previous lesson about styles of communication. David accepted Ryan's support and immediately slowed down. He was then able to communicate clearly.

There were also times when the year 4 children emulated being the 'teacher', asking the younger children question as I would do. This appeared to encourage all involved to reflect on their own behaviours. The year 2 children accepted

this, and addressed their replies to the older children. This could be developed further, with both the younger and older children possibly benefiting from such a 'buddy' system.

Although this evidence is anecdotal, it appears to show that the children are using their skills in other areas of school life. Staff appear to endorse this. They commented on the use of varied vocabulary to describe emotions during other times of the day, e.g. assemblies. There is also the possibility that this is further generalised to the home environment, e.g. Ryan's stated that the lesson he benefited from the most (description of ink splodges written below) helped him to view things at home in a more positive light.

B.9. Which lessons children said they have learned the most from

At the end of the final lesson I asked the children what they thought they had learned most from. The children did not offer many comments. However, Ryan told us of a few activities we had enjoyed where I drew random shapes, lines, splodges etc. on the board. The children were then invited to say what they thought these were. In such an activity there are clearly no right or wrong answers since it is the viewers' perspectives. These activities were carried out during the research period but were not part of the planned lessons for this research. Ryan said that he believed he benefited the most from these lessons because it made him think of 'nice things'. He said that this had helped him at home in particular. He continued "It made me not get angry...Nice things make you think of something nice...I don't see horrible pictures because they make you think horrible things so I think nice ones now" It is possible that such a small activity had helped him to see that the way he perceives something can have an affect upon his feelings. His feelings will then have an affect upon his behaviour, i.e. he recognized a link between thinking, feeling and behaving. Here, Ryan is possibly developing his 'emotional intelligence'. This was unintentional at that time, and without Ryan being able to express this, I would

not have been aware of such development. This is clearly a case of the child helping staff to further help children.

In general though, the children did not give many responses to this question. Perhaps they had lost interest now that the research was coming to an end. I chose to do this as a group interview since the replies were not personal and it would save time. Perhaps it would have been better to have interviewed the children individually. Also, the children may not have been used to being asked questions about their learning. This could be an area for further research.

B.10. Assessing children's skills before and after research

All children took a lot of time and effort completing their first self-assessment sheet. These sheets related to the individual's body language when communicating with others. Some chose to work alone, others waited for confidential support in reading the questions and reiterating which box meant which. All of the children were happy for me to see their completed sheets. Some did not want other children to see theirs (confidentiality was assured and maintained). Ryan and Alex did not want other members of staff to view theirs, but the other children showed no concern in this area. As in other lessons, David needed a lot of support to the set task. He finds it difficult to understand instructions given to the group, but copes well if he receives them individually, with reassurance. He thought carefully before entering a tick in his chosen box. This is reflected in his changing of mind and crossing out a box to put the tick elsewhere (see appendix 18).

When I examined the completed self-assessment sheets I found that no-one thought they were good at everything. The children could have answered truly, i.e. they really were not good at everything. Similarly, this could be reflecting their poor self-esteem, believing that they are not 'good'.

At the end of the research the children were asked to complete the same self-assessment form again. This time they all put that they were 'very good' for everything, except Ryan, who put 'very good' for everything except rate of speech, for which he put 'not very good'. This appears to show that some had made progress in their ways of communicating. Moreover, it could be demonstrating an increase in their self-esteem. They now felt able to say they were 'very good' at something. This possibly reflects the view of Jelly *et. al.* (2000), i.e. that empowering children to take more part in school life can increase their self-esteem. However, this data is not reliable. This second sheet was completed quickly and with apparently less thought. It is possible that they just wanted to finish this last lesson and move on to the next lesson. This does not necessarily mean that the children have not made progress. It is just that, at that particular time, this tool for measuring progress is not completely reliable.

Thus far, I have considered the teaching of lessons designed to encourage children to express themselves verbally rather than physically. The following section is concerned with further research that developed as the project progressed. Firstly, I consider the parents' views. This is followed by phase 2: the important area of including children identified as having EBSD in mainstream school.

B.11 Interviews with parents.

These interviews were carried out to examine the children's earlier experiences of mainstream school before they attended our special school.

I interviewed 7 parents, one for every child in this study. All were keen to give their information and views.

The main feeling from parents was that they were pleased and relieved that their child was in our special school. Their children are relatively new to our

school (8 months maximum, 6 months minimum). Parents were happy if their child was on an inclusion programme.

Three parents told of such problems in mainstream schools that they did not want their child to be even considered for inclusion, especially not to their previous school. Three of the boys also expressed this view. Such views are contrary to the theory that all children in special school should have an aim of returning to mainstream school.

I now discuss the parents' views in more detail.

B.11.1.1. The importance of welcoming children into school

One mother repeatedly said that she felt that she and her son were not wanted in the mainstream school. She said "The headmistress and teachers didn't want to know. They weren't bothered". This links with her child's negative comments about his past school reported earlier. Another parent said that the mainstream school "...don't want to know if your face doesn't fit". The boy of this parent frequently tells us of negative experiences at his last school.

The parents told me of specific incidents that, in their view, made their child feel at best unwelcome, at worst unwanted. One mother told me how she had encouraged her son to say "Good morning" to the teacher when he entered the classroom, but the teacher did not respond. After this happened a few times, the mother went to the teacher and asked her to reply to her son's greeting. Still the teacher did not respond. This mother construed these incidents as rudeness to her son. It must be acknowledged how difficult it is for a teacher to respond to individual children during the initial morning rush of children arriving with dinner money, homework, hanging coats up etc. It has been written by Scarlett and Associates (1998) how preschool children need to 'disconnect' from their carers and the beginning of the school day in order to 'connect' with their teachers, peers and school. This can be done by verbal welcomes from staff,

admiring objects brought by the child from home and so on. Scarlett and Associates view this as an important developmental stage for all children, including those for children with behaviour problems. It can, according to Scarlett and Associates, become an important ritual to help with managing difficult feelings of separation from the main carer. Therefore, staff need to work extra hard with these children in order to encourage them to feel 'connected'. Clearly this did not happen with this child.

Although Scarlett and Associates (ibid) were referring to preschool children, this boy was not much older than this at the time. Moreover, he was possibly not as emotionally developed for his chronological age. Therefore, staff welcoming children, including those older than preschool, into class every morning can support pro-social behaviour. This has also been expressed by our inclusion worker and the children engaged on inclusion programmes. The calling of the register is another ritual with similar potential for feelings of, to use Scarlett and Associates' term, 'connectedness'. Unfortunately, our inclusion worker has been in some mainstream classrooms where our child is not on the mainstream register (since they are just 'visiting' during the inclusion process) and so are not included in this ritual. This could be overcome by the teacher simply calling the child's name, during registration.

B.11.1.2. Serious incidents in school

One mother told me how her son had not experienced any major problems in his early years class. Mum explained how in year 1 her son had soiled himself. The school say that they tried to 'phone Mum, but Mum says that she was not contacted. The school then showered the boy and lent him shorts. Mum reports that her son was very embarrassed. Mum believes this was the main cause for her son's later behavioural problems. (Although she did acknowledge that her son's educational psychologist had said that this incident could have been a trigger. If this had not occurred another trigger could have led to the behaviour problems). After this incident the boy would not use the school toilets and

attempted to avoid school. He became violent, leading to him having a statement of special needs and a placement in our school. One wonders if this boy would have had such serious behaviour problems if this incident had been handled differently. Mum showed anger, insisting that the school had not contacted her. It is probably inappropriate to delve into this matter at this late stage, but it was serious in that it appears to have led to a breakdown in the relationship between home and school, at least on the family's side. Such breakdowns can be difficult to overcome. The importance of seeking to resolve conflicts between home and school as quickly as possible cannot be overestimated. Otherwise, apparently insignificant or small problems can become of major significance.

B.11.1.3. The importance of listening to parents' views

All of the parents appeared to enjoy the experience of being interviewed for this research. They expressed their eagerness for such work and were keen to be involved. Once again, I felt privileged to be a part of this, with parents sharing with me very intimate details of their sons' lives. The views of the parents validated the views of their children, particularly in relation to negative incidents at mainstream school. This gave me further insight into the problems faced by these children, and highlighted the progress they have made since attending our school with its 'safe' environment. (Preece and Timmins *ibid*). Clearly parents have a lot to offer professionals in the planning of support for their child. Yet, many reported that their past mainstream schools had not sought their assistance other than to fetch their child from school when there had been a problem. It is vital that parents and staff can develop a 'shared meaning' of how best to help the child, rather run the possibility that both work from different models which could contradict each other, e.g. as stated by two parents, when a child is physically forced to attend school but is sent home shortly afterwards for assaulting someone.

The parents of the children in this work have contributed towards a better understanding of why a child may act as he does. The next section deals with phase 2, i.e. the research related to including children identified as having EBSD into mainstream school.

B.i.i. Problem intervention - phase 2, including children identified as having EBSD in mainstream school.

This section is concerned with;

- Views of mainstream teachers on their skills to include children identified as having EBSD in their classrooms
- Inclusion worker's views
- Views of children engaged on an inclusion programme

Questionnaires were sent to eight teachers who have or are working on our inclusion programme. A total of five were returned, despite 'phone calls and emails to those who did not return them. Perhaps this demonstrates the busy work schedule of the majority of mainstream teachers.

B.12. Mainstream teachers' views of children identified as having EBSD in their class.

Part 1.

Part 1 of the questionnaire asked the teachers to give details about any children they have taught in the past that they believe were identified as having EBSD. Four mainstream teachers gave details of one child, whilst one mainstream teacher gave details of two children. Although this sample is small, it possibly demonstrates that some mainstream teachers have children identified as having EBSD in their classrooms.

On the question of support they received for the children identified as having EBSD, one teacher received no support, whilst four teachers received some support. This support varied from having a behaviour support person for one meeting to having a learning mentor and a teaching assistant.

The teachers were asked which strategies were the most successful for the child identified as having EBSD. All teachers gave at least 2 examples of successful strategies. One teacher gave five examples. Their replies included praise, humour, stress ball, rewards, time out and clear knowledge of consequences. It is clear that the teachers were using a wide range of positive strategies to support a child in mainstream school who was identified as having EBSD. With such knowledge of successful strategies, it could be assumed that these teachers have some skills in supporting children's emotional, behavioural and social needs. With this in mind, they may be avoiding the risk of some children being excluded from mainstream schools. These teachers are possibly skilled enough to ensure that they do not react to a child's behaviour that causes the child to 'fight or flight'. Instead, they are more able to 'de-escalate' an incident. This is an important skill, as written by Sproson (1992).

The teachers were also asked which strategies for their child identified as having EBSD were the least successful. All teachers gave at least one reply to this question, with one teacher giving three. Whilst these reported unsuccessful strategies are various, e.g. sending child to headteacher, writing lines and exclusion, many are probably used by teachers in schools every day. The most frequently reported unsuccessful strategy was raising the voice (reported by 3 teachers). Most of the children in this research reported that they were 'shouted at' in their previous school. An important message from these teachers, is that we need to closely examine how we speak with children identified as having EBSD, (or indeed all children).

The next part of the questionnaire, i.e., part 2, referred to the time the mainstream teachers included one of our children in their classes. This was split into two sections, namely;

Section 1 - the teachers’ initial experience of our inclusion process

Section 2 - approximately 6 months or more after the start of the inclusion process

I will start with part 2, section 1.

Q1. At the beginning of the inclusion process, how prepared (from training, support, experience etc.) did you feel to include this child in your class?

Please circle the number that corresponds closest to your reply.

Very well prepared	Well prepared	Adequately prepared	Under prepared	Not prepared at all
1	2	3	4	5

Three teachers gave a score of 3, whilst one teacher gave a score of 2. One teacher did not give a score because she was not involved in the inclusion process at the very beginning. So, although the teachers felt at least ‘adequately prepared’, they could have been given more support. Rose (2001) found that the teachers in his research did not feel ‘prepared’ to include children in their classrooms, although both of our sample sizes are small, there is a distinction between the findings of Rose and myself. Rose was addressing the wider aspect of including children with SEN, whereas I am particularly concerned with the area of EBSD. The teachers’ comments in my research included;

I was a little apprehensive before the term started, but need not have been!

This is in keeping with Rose (2001) who writes that we need to allay teachers’ fears about including children with SEN.

Q2. At the beginning of the inclusion process, how much *relevant* support did you receive from our special school staff to include our child into your class?

Please circle the number that corresponds closest to your reply.

Very well supported	Well supported	Adequately supported	Under supported	Not supported at all
1	2	3	4	5

The teachers all gave replies to this question. One teacher gave a score of 3, one teacher gave a score of 2 and three teachers gave a score of 1. This shows that once the teachers had started the inclusion process, and began working with us, they felt at least ‘adequately supported’, ranging to ‘very well supported’. The improvement from the scores for the previous question perhaps demonstrates that whilst a teacher may feel apprehensive when they first start on our inclusion programme, they will possibly feel less apprehensive shortly afterwards.

The teachers made particular comments about our inclusion worker, who works in their classroom with our child on an inclusion programme. In a similar vein, Rose (2001) found that teachers in his research regarded additional staffing as critical for the inclusion of children with SEN to be successful. The mainstream teachers in my research valued our inclusion worker in their classroom. Such comments included;

(the inclusion worker) is very supportive and she will always help me with any issues.

(the inclusion worker) gave me all the information I needed to know about (the child's) situation, including access to his IEP.

One teacher wrote that she was happy to have the child in class provided that our inclusion worker was close at hand. This is possibly because the inclusion worker is the child's stability. He knows her well, and so he is likely to be able to predict her responses to him. She is an integral part of his 'safer environment', (Preece and Timmins 2004).

All comments made about our inclusion worker were very positive. This perhaps shows how valuable she is in our process of inclusion. This is perhaps in contrast to the authority's view. Originally she was employed by the authority as an unqualified assistant and paid at this rate. Whilst working for us she earned the NCFE (Northern Council for Further Education) special needs assistants' certificate. She then earned her level 1 and 2 Strategies for Crisis Interventions and Prevention (SCIPr - UK). Next she earned NVQ level 3 (Early Years Care and Education), and was awarded a 'Medal of Excellence'. Over a period of seven years she has forged her role as our inclusion worker. However, despite letters to the authority, she is paid as an unqualified assistant. Yet, she carries out duties above directly supporting a child in class, e.g. attends reviews, reports on progress, reports to carers and so on. As seen from the above comments from mainstream schools, she is highly valued by staff in mainstream schools. This perhaps shows the lack of sincerity on the part of our education authority to help our children return to mainstream school.

Q3. After approximately 3 months of the inclusion process, how much did you feel prepared to teach (from training, support, experience etc.) and include this child in your class?

Please circle the number that corresponds closest to your reply.

Very well prepared	Well prepared	Adequately prepared	Under prepared	Not prepared at all
1	2	3	4	5

This question was not applicable to one teacher since she had only just started the inclusion programme. One teacher gave a score of 4. Two teachers gave a score of 3 and one teacher gave a score of 1. Although this sample is small, it appears that this is an area that needs improving. Whilst this suggests a need for mainstream teachers to receive more training, it is essential that we liaise with them to ensure that it is relevant training.

One teacher felt that it was difficult to include our child because his attendance was very infrequent. We had withdrawn his planned mainstream visits due to his unsafe behaviours. This was a difficult decision to make. Should we allow a child to visit mainstream if he engages in S.I.s with us? The child’s regression to former behaviour in our special school could be due to anxiety about the mainstream visit. If we ‘punish’ the behaviour by cancelling the visit (which may be the child’s perception), we are punishing the ‘fear response’ (Dadds and Salmon 2003). This is likely to lead to further inappropriate behaviour. If the visit continues the child may become aggressive in the mainstream school. Staff there may then be reluctant to continue with the programme. This will depend upon how the mainstream staff feel able to deal with these problems. However, there must be some limit to the amount of disruptive behaviour that mainstream schools can tolerate.

Q4. After approximately 3 months of the inclusion process, how much *relevant* support did you receive from our special school staff to include our child into your class?

Please circle the number that corresponds closest to your reply.

Very well supported	Well supported	Adequately supported	Under supported	Not supported at all
1	2	3	4	5

As in the previous question, this was not applicable to one teacher who was new to the inclusion programme. One teacher gave a score of 3, one teacher gave a score of 2 and two teachers gave a score of 1.

One teacher wrote that the inclusion worker gave her regular background information about the child, e.g. his worries and any incidents that had happened at home or school. She also wrote that she benefited from the inclusion worker telling her if the child was particularly upset and so may need some time out of the lesson on that day. This shows the importance of passing information to the teachers on a day to day basis.

Another teacher wrote that the child received moral as well as academic support from the inclusion worker, and that this was beneficial. The teacher noted how the inclusion worker was able to withdraw her support as the child became more confident, and that this “allowed him to become an independent member of the class”. In other words, the children gradually ‘disconnected’ from the inclusion worker, and ‘connected’ with the teacher, similar to Scarlett and Associates (1998) ‘connectedness’ from parent to teacher.. Moreover, this allows the child to ‘test’ the new environment, knowing that he has the safety net of the inclusion worker. At the same time, the mainstream teacher was engaging in CPD. The teacher also noted that the inclusion worker was always on hand should there be any problems (including playtime and dinnertime). This could be viewed as the mainstream teacher’s safety net.

Clearly our school benefits from speaking to teachers to find out exactly what it was that was successful, or unsuccessful, to ensure that our inclusion programme is giving the child the best possible chance of success.

Q5. Was there anything we did which made this inclusion process better for you?

There were four replies here, two of which referred to the inclusion worker;

- Presence of inclusion worker – This made the teacher “feel more confident and provided consistency for the child.
- Willingness of inclusion worker to work as class support rather than directed individual child support.

This appears to be emphasizing the valuable role played by our inclusion worker when our school works in partnership with mainstream schools. The next question related to what the mainstream staff thought we could have done to have improved the process of inclusion.

Q6. Was there anything else our special school could have done to improve the process of inclusion?

One teacher wrote how she felt she needed to be made a little more aware of what was “acceptable behaviour”. She gave an example of an incident where the included boy had “reacted in a certain way that I hadn’t seen as particularly disruptive”. The mainstream teacher told him what was acceptable, and then viewed this incident as over. However, the child received a further consequence when he returned back to our special school. The mainstream teacher states that if she had known the “exact rules” of our school then she may have responded in a different way. She continued, stating that she felt that this boy had in effect, two sets of rules – one in his special school and one in his mainstream school. This teacher raised an important point. Our children need consistency.

Another teacher wrote how she would have benefited from visiting the child in his special school. This could also have facilitated a meeting with his special school teacher. Similarly, a teacher added that it would have helped her to feel more at ease initially if she had had more contact with staff in the special school when the child moved to her class from an earlier year group.

Another teacher noted that she would have liked a “Clearer programme for child inclusion”. She added that our child could not visit her class if his behaviour was “poor” in our school. “This became self-fulfilling. He was unfamiliar with us and never truly became included”. As stated in question 3, it is a difficult decision to make, i.e. do we send a child to mainstream school if he is having S.I.s in our school? This teacher believed that we should do so. The child had missed a lot of lessons with her, and so did not have an opportunity to feel included. This could have been very detrimental to the child, and indeed the teacher. This requires careful planning and will no doubt vary according to the individual child *and* the views of the mainstream teacher. This must be considered in the new inclusion package.

The second section of the questionnaire, i.e. part 2, section 2, referred to approximately 6 months or more after the start of the inclusion programme, i.e. after they have had some experience and so possibly gained in confidence, skills and/or knowledge. Such gains could be very beneficial to a child on an inclusion programme. Therefore it is important that these gains are identified to ensure they are ‘passed on’ to future teachers who will teach a child on a similar inclusion programme. Two teachers could not answer these questions since one was new to our inclusion programme and the other could not continue with the inclusion programme since the child was withdrawn. This is discussed below.

Q7. Were there any benefits to the children in the class (including the person on the inclusion programme) from this process of inclusion?

Yes/no

All three teachers circled ‘Yes’. Five positive comments were given, including;

- *“the child made valuable contributions in class discussions, which helped other children to participate”.*

- *“the children became very protective of (the included boy) because although he was very familiar to them, and part of our class, in the playground he was not known but they made sure he was looked after”*
- *“the child himself has.....had a boost to his confidence when he sees himself behaving better or succeeding more than children in the class”.*

Clearly there are benefits to be gained from having one of our children included in a mainstream classroom for all involved. This needs to be made common knowledge to help overcome some of the (possibly natural) fears that many teachers no doubt feel when they first embark upon our inclusion programme.

Q8. Do you feel that you have benefited as a teacher due to this inclusion process?

Yes/no

Two teachers circled ‘yes’. The other teacher did not respond here.

The teachers’ comments included;

- “not obviously, although it is confidence building for me to see him achieving (despite distractions from other children) and it is flattering that he seems to have built a good relationship with me”.
- “definitely, because it gave me a small insight into how special schools function”.
- “I was able to observe strategies that worked with the inclusion child which will help me in future similar situations”.

This suggests that the mainstream teachers who responded here felt some advantage of working in partnership with our special school.

Q9. Were there any problems during the inclusion process?

Yes/no

Two teachers circled ‘yes’ whilst one circled ‘no’.

It appears that the major problems were 'one offs', where it would have been difficult to plan for. For example, one boy's taxi was sometimes late, which resulted in him missing a school trip. Another reported a year 6 boy who had a lot of uncertainty about his transition to his secondary school, and that this was unsettling for the boy and frustrating for staff. On the other hand, this appears to show that the 'system' is letting the children down. Taxis arriving late and an uncertain future placement in a secondary school, are all part of an environment that is not conducive to supporting children identified as having EBSD. This further emphasises the importance of good communication between staff (special and mainstream) and carers. These 'one offs' must be logged to ensure that they are not repeated.

Please add any other comments you feel are relevant.

One teacher added a comment here;

It was a pleasure to work with your staff and the included child.
Once my initial fears were put aside I looked forward to the days
when the included child was in the class. There was always a
'positive' attitude.

From our special school's point of view, we desperately need mainstream teachers like these who took part in our inclusion programme, and this questionnaire. Whilst they are able to learn from us, we also need to learn from them.

This part of the research suggests that mainstream teachers are able to engage in CPD in partnership with our special school.

The mainstream teachers here showed that they are able to identify successful and unsuccessful strategies. However, there is also a need to consider the views of the mainstream teachers in light of my other research findings. They also need to be aware of the importance of not just responding appropriately to

children, particularly when they are highly aroused. The reduction in S.I.s towards the end of the research period suggests that teaching skills of communication, alongside giving children a 'voice' and ensuring they are listened to, may help children to control their strong emotions. In summary, these findings suggest that the CPD of mainstream teachers needs to regard three separate issues, namely;

1. appropriate responses when a child is highly aroused
2. teach communication skills so children use verbal rather than physical means of expressing themselves
3. give children a true voice that is genuinely listened to.

The dissemination of this research project could be a start for the mainstream teachers' CPD. Their input will be valuable when we devise our training programme for mainstream teachers.

Unmistakably, the value of giving children a voice is being recognised more and more in the wider context, for instance the government's publication of 'Every Child Matters' (DfES 2003). In keeping with this, there are more commercially available packages (e.g. DfES 2005b) designed to develop such skills which are suitable for both mainstream and special schools. Therefore, all teachers should already be moving in this direction.

The views of the mainstream teachers appear to highlight the need for them to work in close partnership with teachers in special schools. One person who works in both settings is our inclusion worker. Her views are discussed below.

B.13. Interview with inclusion worker

Our inclusion worker stressed how most teachers she worked with were non-judgemental towards our children when they included them in their classrooms.

She also emphasised how they liaised well with her and were happy to take on her ideas on how to help our children.

On the negative side, the inclusion worker said that sometimes a mainstream teacher would put one of our children 'on the spot', by asking him a question in front of the class. As written by O'Brien and Guiney (2001) teachers may use questioning in a negative way. In this instance it may lead to the child not wanting to continue with the inclusion programme. Although the asking of questions happens in our special school, the children usually feel secure and protected in our 'safer environment', as identified by Preece and Timmins (2004), and so are more able to cope with this than in a much larger class with less well known people.

Our inclusion worker also noted our children may feel less 'included' if the teacher calls the register but does not say our child's name since he is 'visiting' (as discussed earlier). Some teachers do not supply exercise books to our children (possibly due to cost?), although the rest of the class have them. This results in our child working on paper, and, as stated by our inclusion worker, this can make the child feel 'left out'.

On a positive note, the problems mentioned above are small and easily overcome, provided the teachers are prepared to listen to the advice of our inclusion worker. As stated earlier by the inclusion worker, many teachers are prepared to listen to her and take her advice.

When our inclusion worker was asked what more could be done by mainstream schools she stated "Value our pupils instead of the extra adult in the classroom". The mainstream teachers showed high value for our inclusion worker. Her experience of children identified as having EBSD has often helped mainstream schools to deal with mainstream children's disruptive behaviour.

This is an added bonus for the mainstream school. However, this should not be at the cost of our child's placement there.

Our inclusion worker also stated that mainstream teachers should recognise the potential of our children. Some of the teachers believe that because the child attends a special school then he has poor academic abilities and poor social skills. In fact, after a child has attended our school and is ready for inclusion, many have made significant gains in both academic and social abilities. If mainstream teachers were given appropriate training then this would not be such an issue. Hence the need to ensure that teacher's CPD includes the social and emotional development of children.

Having considered adults views on the topic of inclusion, I now examine the views of two boys from our special school who are also on an inclusion programme.

B.14. Children's views – re: those engaged in inclusion at mainstream school

Alex has been involved in inclusion work for one year. He now attends one full day per week. Ryan has been on his inclusion programme for one term. He attends mainstream school for one hour per week.

Both boys said they liked going to mainstream school. Ryan in particular was extremely positive. This could be because the experience is still relatively new to him. Also, his mainstream teacher has helped to develop his self-esteem by acknowledging that his abilities in numeracy are among the best in the class.

When they were asked what mainstream staff did to make the experience of inclusion better for them both said that this was when the teachers made them feel welcome. Alex said it was important that they "Give me good greetings". Ryan agreed and added "They always have manners when you arrive".

Although these boys are older, they may be benefiting from the 'connectedness', mentioned by Scarlett and Associates (1998) earlier. Their

mainstream teachers took the time to make them feel welcome. This was appreciated by the boys. This is in further keeping with a mother's view when she recognised not to do so could lead to behaviour difficulties in the school.

Ryan said that he liked the way his mainstream teacher gave him work "a bit at a time. She doesn't give it us all at once". Ryan finds it difficult to remember instructions for completing tasks if they are given all at once. Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) is important here. In the past Ryan may have been considered unmotivated since he did not complete his work. Yet, if given the work at the correct level (i.e. within his ZPD) he could have been successful. This mainstream teacher was able to identify Ryan's difficulty and act accordingly.

Both boys wanted to tell me what they thought about the surroundings of the mainstream school (even though I had not specifically asked them this). Ryan explained how he liked the friezes and children's work displayed around the school. Alex was more negative, saying that it was confusing because everywhere looked the same. (Both mainstream schools are larger than our school). Ryan said he liked it because the children wore a school uniform (although we have a uniform, most children do not wear it) and litter was not thrown. He also added that he felt safe there because there was a buzzer on the front door, so no-one could enter without consent. This could be one factor in ensuring that children feel they are in a 'safe environment'.

This interview shows that the children are able to give relevant views. Being engaged in this research project may have further developed their skills of expressing their views *and* increasing self-esteem. It is now the responsibility of staff in school to continue listening to these children's views and act on them when appropriate.

The final stage of this research is the 'whole project evaluation'. Although other factors may have played a part, this research appears to support the view that children can be helped to deal with their feelings of anger through developing their skills of communication. In other words, they can substitute their 'physical' communication with verbal communication. Such findings need to be disseminated to our staff and those who work with us in mainstream school. In accordance with action research, this work is ongoing since the views of other professionals who work with children identified as having EBSD will add to this work, validating it or otherwise

C. Whole project evaluation

C.1. Staff development in special school

This research included the views and observations of special school staff in regard to lesson observations and S.I.s. Also included were the inclusion worker's views of our inclusion programme. These have been discussed above. No further research with special school staff was planned, but this work appears to have had an indirect influence on them. In general, they showed particular interest in regard to the children's views, and wanted to compare and contrast their viewpoints with those of mine. This led to staff discussing their hypothesis on why a child acted as he did, and then planning of support strategies based upon the agreed hypothesis, as recommended by Grennhalgh (1994). Staff may have already been doing this, without us being aware. However, the research itself may have brought the value of seeking views into more prominence. I hope that these reflections will continue now after the completion of the research.

Staff were aware of the research methodologies and tools used in this research. We discussed alternative, and possible future research within our school. I hope that this work will encourage staff in my special school to become researchers, as promoted by Rose (2002). Rose stated;

Teachers are more likely to participate in classroom-based inquiry when they perceive that this will have benefits to their own practice and to the needs of the pupils in their classrooms. P46

The enthusiasm of the special school staff in administering this research, particularly the teaching assistants, probably demonstrates that they did perceive the benefits of the classroom-based inquiry. Rose cautions that we must take into account ethical and philosophical considerations. Children's needs and rights must be addressed.

I have invited staff to read my work as it has progressed. I also appreciate their views on the final thesis. We have also had a new teacher join our school. She has worked in a mainstream school, but not in a special one. Her comments on reading this completed thesis could be of value and raise issues for future research.

C.2 Staff development in mainstream school

The DfES (2001b) wrote how, with the right training, strategies and support, nearly all children with SEN can be included in mainstream schools. In my research, the mainstream teachers said that they benefited from the support from our special school, and most offered more help at a later date should I require it. This suggests that these mainstream teachers had overcome their first anxiety and were keen to continue furthering their own development in this area. This is in keeping with Rose (2001) who writes;

An early priority must be to allay the fears of teachers. P155

It is possible that if a mainstream teacher is supported by a special school, they are more likely to gain confidence and develop their skills to include children identified as having EBSD in their classroom. Yet, according to OfSTED (2004), effective partnership between mainstream and special schools (on

curriculum and teaching), is the 'exception rather than the rule'. It appears that the work started with mainstream teachers in this project is a step in the right direction.

This research project has emphasised the importance of children expressing their views in schools, and that staff have a duty to listen and respond (where appropriate) to them. I will now summarise the findings and discuss some implications from this.

D. Summary and implications of findings

This project originated after reflection that our system for encouraging children to follow rules and avoid S.I.s was not effective. I hypothesised that some children used physical aggression as a means of communication, due to their probable lack of communication skills. This research concentrated on specifically teaching skills of communication alongside encouraging children to express their views verbally. Hence, children were given a voice. An added benefit of this was that the children may have felt more 'involved' in their school, and so more likely to want to follow rules.

I also reflected that the environment could be improved to better support children when they were highly aroused. This was done by children telling adults how they could better support them to avoid similar S.I.s occurring again in the future.

Having reached this point, I then considered that if our children were successful in dealing with their strong emotions, then they would start on an inclusion programme back to mainstream school. My concern was that they would be returning to an environment that was not conducive to supporting children when they felt, e.g. angry, so possibly leading to them becoming aggressive again. Therefore I decided to seek mainstream teachers' views about their

experiences of including children identified as having EBSD with a view to ascertaining possible future training needs in this area.

The reduction in the number of S.I.s towards the end of this research suggests that the research project was successful in helping children to deal with their strong emotions. However, other factors must also be taken into account, e.g. small sample size and factors not related to the research, such as changes in the children's home circumstances.

For ease of clarification, I have divided the following section into three areas which relate to the evolved research questions. They are;

1. How can we help children to deal with their feelings of anger?
2. Does teaching skills of communication encourage children to verbally express their views as an alternative outlet for aggression?
3. How skilled do mainstream teachers feel to include children identified as having EBSD in their classroom?

I give below a summary of the findings and implications in these given areas.

D.1. How can we help children to deal with their feelings of anger?

Children and staff were interviewed about their views of a S.I. This was to establish a 'shared meaning' of situations, which teachers could then use to help support a child when he experiences strong emotions. During these interviews staff appeared to share the same views. This could be because it was the 'correct' view, or, more likely, because they shared the same beliefs about working with our children. The children's views were also similar when stating what had happened, i.e. concentrating on the 'factual' events. The main differences were replies to the question of how staff could help a child to avoid a S.I. Some children's replies were probably significant to them, but could not

be put into practice, e.g. allow play instead of lessons. However, one child's response was acted upon, and with success, i.e. allow him a designated area to run in the hall during P.E. Whether or not the adult accepted the child's suggestion, it did not appear to make the situation worse.

If a member of staff chooses not to act on the child's view, e.g. not allow him free time when he does not want to do a lesson, then the reasons why the staff decided to overrule him must be given to the child. In this way, the child may learn that when staff make decisions that he does not like, this is ultimately for his benefit. This also reflects the social order of having someone in control for the benefit of others. Hence, the seeking of 'shared meanings' between adult and child can make a positive contribution towards adult and child relationship and to empowering children to take some control over their environment. By the end of the research period, staff did not engage so much in physically controlling them since they had learned to control themselves more. Such empowerment may have led to the children beginning to use talk as an alternative outlet for aggression. Similarly, staff listening to, and acting upon a child's view will probably help the child to understand why rules are 'there' and so feel less isolated. It could also strengthen the relationship between child and teacher. Hence, staff listening to children could help to overcome the negative attitude felt by some children identified as having EBSD (Garner 1995).

Staff also need to be aware that it is not necessarily a prerequisite for children to discuss what they did 'wrong' in order to move forward. The children who could/would not state their wrongdoings were still able to say how a similar incident could be avoided, albeit at a basic level. This could be enough for the child to 'move on'.

Nevertheless, care must be taken when analysing these findings since this research was small scale. Longitudinal studies would be of benefit to see if the

children continue to use talk in place of aggression as they progress through school, changing class and/or key stages.

The next area considers the best adult responses to help a child avoid a S.I.

D.1.1. What are the best responses from staff to help a child avoid a serious incident?

It appears that responses of staff to children, before, during and after a S.I. is of major significance to the child. This is discussed below.

D.1.1.1. Helping a child avoid a serious incident.

This is to be tackled on two levels, i.e. short and long term.

In the long term, staff should be encouraging children to reflect upon their own behaviour with an emphasis on teaching them how to express their needs, feelings etc. This also includes teaching them the difference between assertive and aggressive behaviour. This will help to avoid children believing that being assertive also means being a 'wimp'.

In the short term, staff should have knowledge and skills on how to avoid escalating a relatively minor problem into a major one, hypothesising on why a child acts as he does, and then giving the appropriate support.

This research has brought to light the importance of a good relationship between staff and children. It does not advocate the view of a teacher having sole power over the children. Instead, the power relationship has shifted, to where the children have a say in their lives, e.g. a child saying how he could avoid a S.I. by moving gym equipment. Teachers need to embrace this change in the power relationship between themselves and the children in their class. Since children model the behaviour of teachers, as suggested by O'Brien

(1998), then sharing of power should encourage children to feel less vulnerable and more likely to also share power with others.

Sadly, some children lose control over themselves, to the extent that they are likely to harm themselves or others. I now discuss the sensitive area of the use of 'physical interventions'.

D.1.1.2. The possible need for physical interventions.

If a child cannot take control of himself it is the duty of the staff to take control for him. If staff avoid such action, the child will possibly engage in further dangerous activities. This could lead to him assaulting someone, and then experiencing the possible harmful effects of remorse for causing hurt and/or a probable suspension from school. Such situations can become a cycle, with subsequent frustration/anger, further feelings of rejection from staff, further S.I.s and further negative consequences. This could be a difficult cycle to break. Staff must constantly reflect on the reasons why they use a P.I., as set out by the DfES and Department of Health (2002) to ensure that there is no other alternative.

The findings of this research rely on observations and comments made by children and staff. Perhaps if more people listened to these views then we would have fewer children identified as having EBSD.

D.2. Does teaching skills of communication encourage children to verbally express their views as an alternative outlet for aggression?

The use of mini cycles of action, where each lesson was evaluated, and this evaluation used to inform the planning of the next lesson, led to a feeling of lack of cohesion between the lessons. However, the children were motivated most of the time. The lessons were designed to develop skills of communication in all areas, with the emphasis being on encouraging children to use verbal

means of communication rather than physical. Anecdotal evidence suggests that as the children experienced more lessons on communication, (and more interviews about their S.I.s), they tended to offer more comments both in lessons and in their interviews. The children who offered the least comments at the beginning of the research appear to have made the most progress. This suggests that teachers should explicitly teach the necessary skills to express views. However, the giving of views in itself is possibly not enough. The children in this research made some suggestions on how staff could respond to them when they felt angry. Staff response was also considered significant by O'Brien and Guiney (2001), who write that teachers must differentiate 'emotionally' in order to avoid drawing children in to abusive behaviours.

D.3. How skilled do mainstream staff feel to include children identified as having EBSD in their classroom?

Generally speaking the small sample of mainstream teachers in this research appeared to enjoy working with our school on an inclusion programme. As they worked with us, they apparently became more confident. This is an important issue, especially in the light of Rose (2001), who found that teachers felt unprepared to include children with SEN in their classrooms. This could explain some of the apprehension of the mainstream teachers when they first start on our inclusion programme. Therefore, the first issue to address with mainstream teachers is possibly to develop their confidence when working with children identified as having EBSD. This may be achieved through the teachers working in tandem with an experienced inclusion worker, as we do on our inclusion programme. At the same time, the inclusion worker will be in the classroom to support the teacher, modelling the correct responses when children first show signs of becoming upset/angry, and show strategies for the teacher to use on their own at a later date. An added advantage of developing mainstream teachers' skills in this area is that this could eventually benefit not just a child from our special school, but also others in the mainstream class. If mainstream

teachers become more skilled they could avoid a child needing a special school placement through offering more appropriate support. This is in keeping with Watkins (2003), who stated that some schools appear to be better at supporting children identified as having EBSD than others.

The small sample used in this research means that these findings are limited, and need to be taken with care, but it could be pointing to the need for an effective partnership between special and mainstream school for training mainstream staff. Unfortunately, OfSTED (2004) claim that such effective partnerships are uncommon. Clearly this is an area for development.

The next chapter is concerned with an overview of the research project, and any changes I would have made were I to undertake the work again.

Chapter 5

Reflection of research project

Firstly, I turn to the research design, and how it could have been improved by adopting different research methodologies. I then consider other issues that I believe are of significance, especially in the area of using ‘personal interventions’ (P.I.s).

A.1. Research diary

Although the diary did not form a major part of this research, it helped link data together. In particular it assisted in noting relevant comments made by children throughout the day, i.e. times not covered during interviews or observations. Such comments have been included in the findings where appropriate. However, I believe that I should have invited staff to also keep a diary. In this way, I may have obtained more data from other parts of the day, including when the children were not with me. This would also have helped to further validate the findings. Although this may have been onerous for staff, I could have asked them to briefly note situations and events that they felt may have had some relevance to this work. We could then have had a discussion with me taking further notes if required.

A.2. Reflections on choice of methodology

I have already noted how this research is limited, e.g. sample size, difficulty in seeking young children’s views, and changes in home circumstances which may have an affect upon the children. One concern is that although the children appeared to give their views, could this have been more successful if they had been sought using different techniques? This is discussed in more detail below.

A.2.1. Research tools to elicit children's views

Before I started this research I believed that the children would offer views, but that they would need support and encouragement. Whilst the children did offer their views, it is possible that they could have become more competent had I used different research tools to do this. Lewis (2004) has written on how to obtain the views of children with difficulties in learning. In particular, Lewis (2002) recommends the researcher making statements rather than asking questions, and using cue cards to prompt children. If I had used these approaches the children may have been able to offer more comments for the reasons given below.

A.2.2. Researcher giving statements rather than asking questions

According to Lewis (2004), when a child is asked a question by an adult, the child is prone to suggestibility, particularly if the child and adult have a rapport. The child may assume the adult knows the answer, and so give a reply he expects the adult wants to hear, instead of his own personal view. To avoid this, Lewis writes how the researcher could make a statement. The child then responds to the statement. Moreover, according to Lewis, statements elicit fuller responses from the child. The giving of statements instead of questions also helps to redress the power imbalance between adult and child. The child should feel less 'interrogated'. My research is concerned with both children expressing their views as fully as possible, and to give some empowerment to the children. The making of statements during interviews, rather than asking questions could have been of benefit.

In the giving of statements though, care would have to be taken to ensure that criticisms of the children's behaviour are not implied in the statements, e.g. "You did something wrong today", but, with sensitive planning, this could have been incorporated into the children's interviews.

A.2.3. Use of cue cards

Lewis (2002) showed how, after practice, children aged 6-12, in a school for moderate learning difficulties, were able to retell a series of events, or an incident. Lewis used a set of cue cards to elicit the children's responses. The cue cards acted as prompts and related to; people, talk, setting (indoor and outdoor), feelings and consequences. Using the cue cards meant that there was minimal interruption, in term of questioning, from the interviewer. Lewis (2002) noted;

After practice in the use of the (cue) cards, the children became adept at retelling a series of events, or an incident, including significant and correct detail. P114

Lewis cautions that the use of these cue cards was not successful with children with 'marked autistic spectrum disorders'. Although two children involved in this research were on the autistic spectrum, neither would be considered 'marked'. Hence, I believe that this system could have been successful with the children in our school.

A.3. Giving feedback to children

When I had finished collecting the data relating to the children's views, we had a party to celebrate. For a short while the children showed some interest as I gave them feedback as the work progressed. They particularly wanted reassurance that their comments were valid. But, after a while they stopped asking questions. If I referred to it, they showed less interest, and even boredom. It was at this point that I believed that the children had 'moved on'. Yet, I share the belief of Lewis (2002), in that feedback should be given to children about the outcomes of the research. Three of the children have now moved on to the next group, whilst two others have moved to full time mainstream school. When this work is finalised I intend to tell the children individually, and invite them to ask for more information if they desire.

A.4. Planning of lessons

My intention was to plan each lesson according to the evaluation of the previous lesson. This had its advantages, e.g. ensuring the children were motivated, if they showed some boredom, then I ensured that the following lesson varied enough to keep the children's interest. However, towards the end of the research, I began to feel that the lessons were somewhat 'ad hoc'. With hindsight I feel that the lessons would have been better if I had followed a set programme for teaching a wide variety of skills, such as communication, recognizing emotions, raising self-esteem etc. There are packages for this, including DfES (2005b) 'Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning' (SEAL), which could have been of benefit for my research. The teaching of SEAL takes a lot longer than my research period, but I feel that my lessons were merely addressing the 'surface' or 'crisis' issues, rather than the needs of the whole child. Perhaps a selection of lessons from SEAL would have been more appropriate.

A.5. Reflective practitioner

This work has been centred around myself as a reflective practitioner. I have tried to be as objective as possible, and sought to validate the data by seeking the views of different people. However, there is a danger that I have been too 'close' to the work, and so, at times, have been unable to see the wider picture. As the research progressed, I asked different people to read my work and offer their comments. Whilst this helped me to keep focused, I am concerned that they were not as critical as they could have been. This is probably at least partly due to the fact that I am one of the most experienced people to work with our children. This tends to lead to some staff turning to me for advice, and rarely questioning my views. Although I encouraged staff to challenge my work, they rarely did. Perhaps it would have been better had I asked an advisor or similarly experienced person to act as 'devil's advocate' in order to ensure that I was being as objective as possible. A permanent 'critical friend' could have

challenged me to examine my work more closely, rather than a series of supportive colleagues.

Having reflected on how I could have carried out this research project differently, I now wish to highlight other issues which have arisen that I consider to be highly relevant.

A.6. Other issues

A.6.1. The use of personal interventions (P.I.s)

Adults must work to keep the relationship between themselves and children positive. A child may feel humiliated and/or embarrassed after a P.I. It is the duty of staff to overcome these feelings, e.g. offering a drink, ensuring the child is comfortable after he has calmed down.

The findings appear to suggest that there are times when the children in our school are operating at a younger age in terms of their behaviours in some social settings. There are times when they can become so emotional that they need adults to take control of them, by using a P.I. The major benefit of staff using a P.I. is that once a child is properly restrained, it is unlikely that anyone, including the child, will suffer physical harm. However, there is no such thing as a 'safe' restraint. An important disadvantage is that someone could be hurt whilst staff try to move the child into the correct position as directed by our training. Another disadvantage is that the child possibly suffers humiliation at being held as such, even though staff take care to limit this as much as possible, e.g. not shouting. During these times the child is experiencing an adult taking care of his 'raging emotions'. Train (1993) claimed that adults must do this, since the child is unable or unwilling to take control of his emotions for himself. The findings of this research appear to suggest that the disadvantages of using physical interventions are outweighed by the advantages. Indeed, David said in his interview that we should hold him to ensure that no-one is

hurt when he is aggressive. Many parents have also said that they prefer it if staff use a P.I. rather than allow their child to hurt someone, with the possible consequence of suspension from school. Care must be taken here since the sample of parents interviewed was small, and their views could be very different from other parents. Not all parents would feel that they could trust the staff to act in such a way.

Many teachers, particularly those who have had little or no training in physical restraint, (i.e. the majority) are reluctant to take such measures. The main reasons are probably due to the fear of causing more harm to the child (e.g. through improper restraint techniques) and from fear of being taken to court for child abuse. Both fears are very real. The DfES and Department of Health (2002) have issued a booklet on guidance on the use of physical interventions. This guidance stresses that physical intervention should be the last resort, but could be used earlier if certain conditions are met. Such conditions are;

- Primary prevention has not been effective, and
- The risks associated with *not* using a restrictive physical intervention are greater than the risks of using a restrictive physical intervention, and
- Other appropriate methods, which do not involve restrictive physical interventions, have been tried without success. 5.1, p14

Such guidance possibly supports the teacher, but is this guidance enough to protect a teacher who faces court action for using a physical restraint? What is clearly needed is to make the role of staff more specific in such circumstances, with associated training.

A.6.2. Supporting children during a physical intervention

A.6.2.1. Greenhalgh's (1994) 'Emotional Holding'

The literature review includes Greenhalgh's (1994) claim that an adult can assist the child by using what he terms as 'emotional holding'. This is where the adult shows the child that their projected or transferred strong negative feelings (and corresponding aggressive behaviour) can be shared by the adult, but the adult can avoid responding aggressively. This strongly appears to be the case in the following incident. Alex and other children had been banned from football due to not following instructions. Alex started to shout and swear at staff. I gave him 'space', but he suddenly threw his pencil pot across the room and shouted abuse at staff. Alex looked as if he was going to overturn a table. I used a one person escort. Alex kicked me on the shin. We then used a two person escort, but Alex continued to kick out. We then used a P.I. Alex was shouting at us that he hated us and that we hated him. During these times we do not usually speak with the child. This is because a child cannot listen whilst he is shouting. Also, it is not conducive to the conditions of an appropriate conversation if the adults are using a P.I. Added to this, there are issues of power status in such an incident, i.e. the adults have full power, and so are not in a position to have a conversation on an equal footing with the child. However, I considered Greenhalgh's 'emotional holding', and decided to speak quietly to Alex, so he would become quiet himself in order to hear. I told him that I could see how badly he was feeling, and that I did not believe that a ban from football would cause him such anger. It may be another issue that was making him so angry. I then told him that perhaps he wanted me to shout back at him that I hated him. Perhaps he wanted to fight me so that he could feel better for having hurt someone, or being hurt himself. Alex responded with "But you do". I then added that I would never say I hated him, no matter what happened because I do care. I told him that I was not going away, but was there for him, as I have been in the past. Alex calmed down and looked as if he would cry (a rare occurrence). He became quiet and still. I then told him to sit

on a chair at a table. He did so. He accepted the consequences calmly. In my opinion, Alex did understand my words, and recognised that his strong feelings of anger were not entirely due to his football ban or myself. He was perhaps shocked, and even perplexed, that I refused to respond in kind to his abuse, even though he had kicked me. In a situation of anger and abuse, I was able to demonstrate to him that I could endure such extreme emotions calmly. I could also affirm my total care to him, and that I would not reject him. This appeared to be a very important lesson for him. He sat quietly at the table as directed, apparently in deep thought. After I was sure that he was OK I went for my lunch break. I did not expect him to continue making such progress by showing remorse, as shown below.

A.6.2.2. Showing remorse

There are times when adults expect children to show remorse, e.g. saying “Sorry”. Whilst this is a ‘normal’ social skill, it does not necessarily mean that the child actually feels remorse. They may even appear remorseful, but in truth they regret the consequences rather than their actions. This appeared to be the case with some of the children in this research. If adults insist upon a child showing remorse, this could be emphasising the adults’ power over the child, i.e. making them do something they do not want to do. Just as a child may not have to express his wrong actions in order to move on, he may not have to show remorse, or at least how adults may expect it. I will now discuss an incident where I believe Alex showed genuine remorse with no adult prompts.

After my lunch break I supervised the children in the dining room. At the lunch table Alex chose to sit with David. This is unusual since David is a demanding speaker, but rarely listens to the views of others. Alex talked with David, showing an interest in David’s conversation (even though David is a year 2 boy with limited vocabulary whilst Alex is a year 4 boy with good vocabulary). When we returned to class I told the assistant how Alex had been nice to David.

Alex then said that he had done so to help me, i.e. so I would not have to converse with David whilst I ate. This could be construed as Alex believing that this could help to make up for him kicking me. I believe this shows reflection on his own behaviour, and a desire to make amends other than the ones imposed by us, i.e. writing lines and loss of free time. Alex was probably at stage 3 of Kohlberg's model of moral development, i.e. doing his 'duty', and not for personal gain. He was also showing respect for authority.

During Alex's interview about this incident he said "I wish I'd calmed myself down. I wish I didn't kick you". Whilst this comment may have been merely said in the belief that this was the 'right thing' to say, his other ways of making amends, i.e. sitting by David, was, in my belief, a real desire to make up for his violence. There have since been two incidents of Alex becoming angry. Although he used verbal abuse he stayed in his seat and did not hurt anyone, or require a P.I.

I now turn to the final chapter. Here I reflect on this research and considerations for future research.

Chapter 6

Reflections and conclusions

This research has been concerned with the views of a small sample of boys identified as having EBSD and the staff who work with them. The hypothesis was that if children expressed themselves verbally, they would be less likely to use physical aggression as a means of communication. The children were explicitly taught skills of communication in order to encourage them to express their views. Since such a small sample was used, the findings of this work must be taken with care. For example, the personalities of the boys in this research may have had a large impact on the replies given by them. Furthermore, their personalities may not be comparable with boys of the same age and identified with similar needs in future years at our school. Whilst more research is needed (more details are given below), there is scope for discussing some implication of the findings.

This research may inform school practices in various areas. These will now be covered in more detail.

A. A psychodynamic approach to understanding children's behaviour.

In the first stages of this research I found that our practice related to reducing the number of S.I.s was not effective. Some children were frequently engaging in S.I.s, even when offered rewards for avoiding them. I found that the use of behaviourist approaches to change children's behaviour was not effective for a significant minority of our children, and that some could be damaged by it.

When a child is consistently denied rewards that he sees his peers having, this is probably reinforcing his feelings of low self-worth. Teachers need to ensure the child does not feel 'isolated' or that rules are 'just there', but instead teachers should be seen to be 'willing to negotiate and listen to another side of the

story', Garner (1995). This is not achieved through a system of rewards and negative consequences for pre-defined overt behaviours. We need to look further than the child's outward behaviour; we need to seek his perceptions, with a view to reaching a 'shared meaning'. In this way, a teacher will be in a better position to understand the child and hypothesise on why he acts as he does. Only by doing this can we then start to put into place effective strategies to help him to deal with his strong emotions.

Thus, my principle was that adults need to better understand the child's 'inner world', and that in order for this to occur, children need to express their views to adults. I also believed that the children probably lack the necessary skills of communication. Indeed, this may be why some children use 'physical' means of communication rather than verbal. This is in keeping with Sage (2002), who wrote that children fail to learn how to communicate what they really feel, think and mean. My research intervention aimed to develop the skills of communication. This is discussed in the following section.

B. Teaching skills of communication to replace 'physical communication'

Stage three of the research aimed to find a way of helping children to deal with their feelings of anger by replacing physical aggression with verbal communication. I taught lessons to develop skills of communication so that children would be in a better position to 'negotiate' with staff to help resolve their difficulties. The findings appear to show that the children's skills of communication increased towards the end of the research period, although other factors may have also played a part, e.g. more motivation to speak led to increases in number of comments. This suggests that we should pay attention to the specific teaching of communication, with the clear intent of reducing physical aggression.

I believe that teaching and encouraging children to engage in dialogues about their behaviour choices is more 'child centred', and serves as an alternative outlet for aggressive behaviour. There is a danger that the use of sanctions and rewards for overt behaviours ignores the child's 'inner' world. The child's behaviour *and* his emotions/feelings must be taken into account, without addressing the former at the cost of the latter. This is in keeping with Sage (2002), who emphasised how some children could not 'negotiate themselves out of trouble'. Therefore, schools must explicitly teach children how to do this. From my experience during this research, I believe that a planned scheme of work to explicitly teach skills of communication and ways of dealing with emotions is needed. One resource that could be valuable is DfES (2005b), 'SEAL'. Clearly though, more research is needed with a larger sample size and to ascertain the best lesson content to develop children's skills of communication.

When this research was carried out with the children, it was done so entirely in our special school setting. Further research would be needed to ascertain if the findings, including the increase in children's comments, also apply to mainstream settings.

Whilst it is important that children are specifically taught to use verbal communication, it is also vital that children are listened to by the adults. This is discussed in the following section.

C. The importance of listening to children's views

The use of behaviourist strategies does not take into account what a child should 'do' with his anger. It appears that some schools are expecting children to control their anger by 'bottling it up'. Children are expected to deny their emotions in order to receive a reward, yet, as written by Faupel *et al.* (1998) this 'bottling up' of emotions could be more damaging. Instead, as suggested by the findings of this research, children need to be specifically taught how to

express themselves verbally in order to better deal with their strong emotions. They would then be in a better position for 'negotiating themselves out of trouble' Sage (2002).

This research showed that even young children could discuss their own behaviours, including behaviour during a S.I., with a view to reflecting on, and so learning from it. Governmental literature has encouraged seeking children's views about their education, (DfES, 2001a and b). This includes the rights of the child to have a say in their school placement and target setting for Individual Education Plans. Hence a recognition that children should have a say in their lives. My research shows that we should seek children's views on wider aspects of their lives, including their views on more 'everyday' matters. This is qualitatively different from seeking views about target setting for IEPs. In particular, my research sought children's feelings and views about their own S.I.s when they engaged in aggressive behaviour. Seeking the views of children about their S.I.s has a benefit in that the individual child and staff were more likely to reach a shared understanding of the event. Moreover, the very act of engaging in discussions can enhance the relationships between teachers and staff, and between children and their peers. A good relationship between child and teacher was identified by Brendtro and Van Bokern (1994) as 'vital'.

The benefits of involving children and their views in regards to their schooling is gaining momentum. It is made explicit in the governmental publication 'Every Child Matters' (DfES 2003). MacGilchrist and Buttrell (2004) write how schools need to consider much more than just target setting and league tables. They show how involving young people in their schooling developed confidence, self-esteem and attitudes needed to become life long learners. All schools, whether mainstream or special, must take this into account. Unfortunately, it appears that children are not as involved in their learning as they should be. OfSTED (2004) write that children are not necessarily consulted regarding decisions about their support, reviews of that support, or

the progress they make. The lack of involvement of the children could partly be due to a belief that children, particularly young children, have difficulties in expressing their views. The findings from this research appeared to show that the children improved in their ability to express themselves. Whilst this could have been due to the teaching of the lessons, the act of the staff seriously *listening* to the children could have had a major positive influence on the children. I have learned from this research that children will express their views about matters that concern them if they are explicitly encouraged to do so. The children may have felt more motivated to speak since they knew that their words would be taken seriously. It is clear that children (and probably adults) are more likely to perform better if they have reasons for what they do. Perhaps children need more encouragement and motivation to express their views in school. There are commercial teaching aids available designed for these purposes, e.g. 'Nurturing Emotional Literacy' (Sharp 2001). Further research may prove which strategies are the most successful, and so help us in our quest to help children help themselves.

Staff also need to continually seek children's views since schools and relationships within them are continually changing. Over time, the population of children changes entirely. There will never be a time when staff know all there is to know about the children in their school. Life is never dull working with children!

If we accept that children should give their views, and that adults should respond appropriately to them, this raises the issue of children's abilities to do so. It should not be assumed that all children know how to express themselves clearly. Whilst some will be more able than others, it is clear that children can benefit from being taught skills of communication. To not do so may result in a child not being able to express himself verbally, and so use physical means instead.

Whilst I have considered the need for children to be taught how to communicate, there is also a possible need for staff training in this area. This is discussed below.

D. Staff training

At the end of the research period I met with special school staff to disseminate the overall findings. Staff were very energized with the project, in particular the meeting of the success criteria of a reduction in the number of S.I.s towards the end of the research period. This led to the staff wanting to know more details, including the theory and research written in the literature review. They have been given copies of the thesis and invitations to discuss the work further, either individually or in a meeting. The dissemination of this research has become ongoing, since some staff have left, and new ones joined. In the future, my thesis can be used to inform an induction programme for new staff in our school.

In the literature review I noted how staff training for classroom management appears to be limited (Watkins 2003, Smith 2003), although the DfES (2004b) are attempting to address this with initial teacher training and Induction Standards for Qualified Teachers. However, more needs to be done. The findings of this research show that the mainstream teachers appear to have benefited from working alongside an experienced inclusion worker, who models responses to children in order to help them control their aggression. In the literature review I noted that OfSTED (2004) wrote how generally, partnerships between special schools and mainstream schools were 'underdeveloped', and that there were few incentives for special schools to reach out to mainstream schools. This research has shown how mainstream and special school staff can work together. Our inclusion worker is a very experienced assistant. Whilst she supported our child in a mainstream classroom, the mainstream teachers were able to observe her

responses/strategies. Over a period of time, our inclusion worker gradually reduced her support, allowing the mainstream teacher to take over.

My research suggests that there was value in our special schools working in partnership with mainstream schools. However, care must be taken here since the sample size is very small. More research is needed in this area.

D.1. Implications for mainstream schools

The OfSTED report (2004) noted that when a child with SEN coped poorly, the school often attributed this to the pupils' difficulties rather than the school's inability to provide adequate support. This research has pointed to how the problems are not 'within' the child. Instead, the child's behaviour is changed through changing his environment. In other words, the child responds to the environment he is in. Teaching and encouraging children to express their views about their behaviours could be of benefit to children in mainstream school. Clearly this is an area for further examination, particularly in a mainstream setting.

One of the difficulties for mainstream staff is that they may need training to teach and encourage children to express their views. Even then, if staff did have such skills, would they have the time to practise them? Carrying out child interviews (both individual and group) were time consuming. One can see how it is easier for a teacher in a special school (with smaller classes), to engage in such dialogues. This would be much more difficult for a teacher in a mainstream class with 30 children. Similarly, could a mainstream school be able to offer the same 'safer environment' (Preece and Timmins 2004) as a special school?

E. Future considerations

This research appears to show that if children are given a 'voice' then they can be helped to express their anger in non-aggressive ways. It would be

interesting to continue seeking these children's views over a longer period of time. Their views could be invaluable for supporting future children who will share the same experiences at a later date, e.g. change from primary to secondary school.

Now that this work is completed I intend to work on a package for training teachers who will include children from our school into their mainstream classrooms. It appears that the best way to do this is to start with a member of staff (assistant or teacher) working alongside a mainstream teacher in the mainstream classroom. The mainstream teacher can then observe how the 'expert' responds to the children, and then use the strategies her/himself. There will also be a theory element, e.g. to help staff understand why a child's behaviours, including aggression, are 'psychologically logical' (Greenhalgh 1994). This will include some 'taught' element, including the limitations of the behaviourist model in changing children's behaviours. I expressed my concern at the beginning of this research that some teachers may blame the child when the behaviourist strategy was unsuccessful, since the teacher had 'applied' the strategy correctly. Such errors could be overcome by an understanding of the need for a social constructivist approach to ensure we are considering the 'whole' child, not just his overt behaviours. Mainstream staff must also consider the theories of why children respond as they do. The mainstream teachers could be invited to hypothesise on why a child responds as he does in a given setting, and then make suggestions on what they could do to support him, particularly during his high arousal times. Clearly such a training programme will need careful evaluation to ensure that it is effective in reaching its aim, i.e. to help children deal with their feelings of anger.

We often say in our school that 'We teach the children whom no-one else wants to teach'. Yet, these children have proved to be the most rewarding I have ever had the privilege to work with. They have a lot to teach us, if only we will listen to them.

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Appendix 1

Definition of 'serious incident'

For the purposes of this research I have defined a 'serious incident' as when a child has hurt, or tried to hurt another person. Verbal abuse alone is not considered 'serious'. If a child was making verbal threats *and* e.g. raised his arm with an apparent intent to hit, then this is counted as a 'serious incident'. The same criteria are used when deciding if a member of staff should use a 'personal intervention' (i.e. restraint). It is not permissible to use a personal intervention on a child who is merely swearing at the member of staff.

Date:
Time:
Reporting Staff:
Adult Witnesses:

Pupils Names:
Class:
Place:
Witnesses:

1. Antecedent (context in which the incident occurred - use of level 1, 2 & 3 Interventions & pupil behaviour)

2. Record of Incident (reason why Personal Intervention (level 4) was required, if used)

Was the child liable to self injury?
Were other children liable to injury?
Were adults liable to injury?
Was property about to be damaged?
Was good order / safety prejudiced?
Other substantive reasons: (give details)

Yes

No

Occurred

3. Description of Intervention

Personal Intervention

Duration

4. Record of Injuries to pupils / staff (body map should be attached, signed and witnessed (please))

Injured Persons:
Name

Designated

Report of Accident Form Number

5. Record any damage to property (include estimated cost of repair/replacement)

6. Measures taken to ensure that the pupil was calmed after the incident

7. Report Administration

Completed

Date: Time: a.m. / p.m.

Signature Designation

Report discussed with Senior Staff

Signature of Senior Staff Member

8. Action taken by Headteacher / Deputy / Senior Manager (initial action taken)

Name Designation

Incident Record processed & filed

Accident Report processed & filed

Schools Incident Report Sheet processed & filed

Parents informed - letter/phone/meeting (date) (within 24 hours)

Date or Time

Other professionals / agencies informed

9. Action Log (any other actions taken / follow up from other professionals)

Date

Summary of Actions / Reports

Appendix 3

Interview with child re: serious incident

Incident no. _____

Note All interviews must begin with an introductory discussion, reiterating why this is being done and the guarantee of confidentiality. Children will be told they can terminate interview at any time. Children will also be encouraged to ask any questions of their own.

Q1 Do you remember the problems when you used to become angry/upset and then break rules?

yes / no (If 'no', thank child and terminate interview). If yes, go to question 2.

Q2 Tell me what happened.

Q3 Did you want these things to happen? If no, what could someone have done to have helped you?

Q4 Do you think you could have done anything different? If yes, what?

Q5 You do not break rules very often now. Why do you think this is so?

Q6 Is there anything else you would like to say? (Use back of this form to write answer)

Appendix 4

Incident form to be completed by staff when they witness an aggressive incident
Name _____

Incident form

Date	Antecedent	Aggres sion? Write Y or N	Type of aggression (if applicable)	After incident	Other comments

Staff questionnaire

Incident no. _____

Initials of child _____ Initials of staff interviewed _____

Q1 This interview is about incident no. _____. Please tell me what happened.

Q2 What do you feel the child could have done instead, to avoid hurting someone?

Q3 Do you think you could have supported him more before, during and/or after the incident? If so, what?

Before _____

During _____

After _____

Q4 Is there anything else you would like to add?

Lesson plan

Appendix 6.1

Lesson number 1 date 04/12/04

Initials of children present R, A, P, Mi

Staff: GC and L

Observer(s) initials J

Title Establishing vocabulary of emotions
Resource Nurturing Emotional Literacy – Sharp, P. (2001) <i>Nurturing Emotional Literacy</i> . A practical guide for teachers, parents and those in the caring professions. David Fulton. P124
Follows on from 1 st lesson of this research
Resources 1. Revised vocabulary list
Lesson aims <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To define emotions on list• To recognise how a person may act when they experience certain emotions
Lesson objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none">• describe each emotion as I state it. (If children do not know, I will explain).• Use circle time – state when they felt one emotion.? What were the circumstances? What did they do? If this goes well, continue with a second emotion (and third if motivation is still high)• Do a picture to put up on our new ‘feelings wall’ alongside the vocabulary list
Outline of lesson Children will sit at their desks and volunteer to describe each emotion. If it seems that some do not know, I will clarify what each emotion means. We will then sit in a circle. Rules of circle time will be reiterated. The children will take turns to tell of a time they felt a chosen emotion, giving the circumstances and what they did. If this is successful this will be repeated 2 or 3 times, according to motivation. Children will then return to their table to draw a picture (or write if they prefer) of when someone experienced a chosen emotion.
Other information
Evaluation
Next lesson

Lesson plan**Appendix 6.2**

Lesson number 3 date 12/12/03
 Initials of children present D, R, P, Mi, Ma, C
 Staff GC and ----- Observer(s) L

Title Communication
Resource Talkabout. A social communications package. Kelly, A. (1996) Speechmark Publishing Ltd. Pp44-45
Follows on from Defining vocabulary of emotions –Sharp, P. (2001) <i>Nurturing Emotional Literacy</i> . A practical guide for teachers, parents and those in the caring professions. David Fulton.
Lesson aims <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To know that communication is expressed through body language, the way we say things and having conversations • To know different types of body language
Lesson objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to listen to adults saying the same things using different ways of saying phrases and different body language • to identify what adult really means through the way they say something and their body language rather than what they said • to state set phrases in different ways to give different meanings • to identify children's meanings of set phrases through their body language and the way something is said •
Outline of lesson Children will sit at their tables. They will be asked to define communication. If they cannot, I will give a simple definition. I will then state how we communicate through three different ways (1. body language, 2. the way we say things and 3. having conversations). They will then discuss an enlarged copy of p44. This will be discussed. Children will then be given examples of an adult saying the same phrase using different ways of saying it, and different body language. Children will be encouraged to also have a go. We will discuss how we can alter the meaning of our words through our voice tone and body language. When children appear to understand this, we will then consider and name different types of body language. Children will be given a copy of p45 each. We will then discuss the different types of body language examples given, and consider others. The lesson will end with an emphasis on how our body language, tone of voice etc. makes a difference to how we speak to each other.
Evaluation – see separate sheet
Next lesson

Lesson plan**Appendix 6.3**

Lesson number 7 date 09/01/04

Initials of children present D, R, A, P, Mi, Ma, C

Staff GC and ----- Observer(s) L

Title Section 1 Body language p5-6
Resource Ready to go! Ideas for PSHE. Oliver, I. (2000). Scholastic Ltd.
Follows on from Talkabout. A social communications package. Kelly, A. (1996) Speechmark Publishing Ltd. Pp44-45. Children have become bored with this scheme of work
Lesson aims <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To identify different emotions • To recognise that some emotions are difficult to identify • To recognise that body language can be difficult to interpret • To consider how different emotions can be dealt with
Lesson objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • examine different pictures of people showing different emotions • name as many different emotions as they can for each picture • discuss how body language can be difficult to interpret • discuss how we can ask how someone is feeling if we are not sure from their body language • Discuss how the person in the picture may be able to 'deal with' their feeling at that time
Outline of lesson I will emphasise how we have become bored with the previous lessons and so we have moved on to this new 'exciting', work. I will show them the picture of the two dogs on the lesson plan. We will discuss how we think they feel. How do we know? Do dogs really smile, look sad etc? I will then put up enlarged pictures of p12, showing different people feeling different emotions. We will discuss each one in turn. Children will then work in pairs on one of the pictures. They will discuss together, then to the whole group, how they feel that person could deal with their present feeling. At the end of the lesson, children will be invited to come to the front of the group to mime a chosen emotion for us to interpret.
Evaluation See separate sheet
Next lesson

Lesson plan**Appendix 6.4**

Lesson number 20

date 05/03/04

Initials of children present D, R, P, Mi, Mat,

Staff GC and -----

Observer(s) L

Title Jessie's story – why Jessie changed
Resource Say what you think. Story and activity book.. 4Learning. Prentice, M. (2001) Channel Four television Corporation.
Follows on from Feelings. Need to encourage use of vocabulary for emotions (i.e. not just listen to them).
Lesson aims <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To use vocabulary for emotions • To understand that people may have different views. • To develop an understanding of fair and unfair and individuals' rights • To understand about responsibility for one's actions.
Lesson objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To 'hot seat' answering how Jessie may have felt at different points in the story. • To discuss Jessie's changing feelings as the story progresses • To discuss how Jessie could have dealt with her negative feelings in a better way • To complete worksheet p12 'Why Jessie changed'.
Outline of lesson I will re-emphasise how we need to use correct vocabulary for emotions. As in the previous lesson I will use the vocabulary list and ask children to state when Jessie may have felt that way. I will recap the video we watched last lesson. I will then ask children to be in the 'hot seat'. I will ask questions related to her feelings, encouraging them to use different vocabulary for emotions. Children will be encouraged to also ask questions. Children will then complete worksheet of Jessie changing her feelings throughout the story.
Evaluation See separate sheet

Lesson plan

Appendix 6.5

Lesson number 22 date 12/03/04
 Initials of children present D, R, A, P, Mi, Ma, C
 Staff GC and ----- Observer(s) L

<p>Title</p> <p>Ben's story – How is Ben feeling?</p>
<p>Resource</p> <p>Say what you think. Story and activity book.. 4Learning. Prentice, M. (2001) Channel Four television Corporation.</p>
<p>Follows on from</p> <p>Ryan's story:rules. Say what you think. Story and activity book.. 4Learning. Prentice, M. (2001) Channel Four television Corporation.</p>
<p>Lesson aims</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To show respect, concern and care for others • To recognise how actions of individuals have consequences for other people • To develop vocabulary of emotions
<p>Lesson objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop vocabulary of emotions • To discuss Ben's changing feelings as the story progresses • To discuss how Ben could have dealt with his negative feelings in a better way
<p>Outline of lesson</p> <p>I will explain that we are going to do similar work as the previous lesson, but using a different story.</p> <p>I will then recap some feelings vocabulary from the list in order to prompt use of more words.</p> <p>I will then show the video of Ben's story (right and wrong p 21-23). I will then give the children a photocopy of p26 'How is Ben feeling?'. As in the previous lesson we will discuss how Ben's feelings change as the story progresses. Children will then be invited to give their comments and ideas for how Ben could have responded in a better way. The emphasis will be on using the correct vocabulary for Ben's feelings.</p> <p>We will examine the vocabulary offered at the bottom of the sheet, and then add our words, stating which words are more appropriate and why.</p> <p>Children will then have the opportunity to complete the sheet if they so wish.</p>
<p>Evaluation</p> <p>See separate sheet</p>

Lesson plan

Appendix 6.6

Lesson number 28 date 21/04/04
 Initials of children present A,R,P,Mi,D,C.
 Staff GC and ----- Observer(s) L

<p>Title Story book – Angry Arthur, by Oram, H. and Kitamura, S. (1982) Random House Children’s books.</p>
<p>Resource Book, by Hiawyn Oram</p>
<p>Follows on from Confidence</p>
<p>Lesson aims</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To recognise that all people experience anger • To know that anger is a natural feeling • To know that anger can be dealt with in a non-aggressive way
<p>Lesson objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To listen to story • To discuss what being angry feels like • To discuss different ways of dealing with anger
<p>Outline of lesson I will explain to the children that I am going to read a book about a young boy who feels angry. I will state that I want them to think of how this boy must have felt and to consider how the author tried to demonstrate this in the book. I will then read the story. After I have read the story I will ask the children to offer their comments. If they are reluctant to speak I will use prompts, e.g. do you remember feeling this angry? What did you do? What could the boy have done?</p>
<p>Evaluation See separate sheet</p>

Lesson plan**Appendix 6.7**

Lesson number 31 date 06/05/04

Initials of children present D, R, A, P, Mi, Ma

Staff GC and ----- Observer(s) L

Title Self assessment - the way I talk 2 nd self assessment
Resource Talkabout. A social communications package. Kelly, A. (1996) Speechmark Publishing Ltd. P49
Follows on from End of PSHE lessons for this research
Lesson aims <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To consider children's own strengths and weaknesses in the way they talk.
Lesson objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To identify children's own strengths and weaknesses in the way they talk. To complete a self-assessment sheet of their identified strengths/weaknesses in the way they talk.
Outline of lesson I will remind children of how to complete the sheet from last time. I will stress that I want them to complete it as honestly as possible. I will also explain how they will be kept confidential, although they will be used in my university report. Children who need help with reading, or support of any kind will be offered this. I will also ask the children to discuss what they have learned most from this work and what they enjoyed.
Evaluation See separate sheet

Lesson Observation Sheet
Date **Lesson no.** **Title of lesson**
Person(s) completing forms
Staff

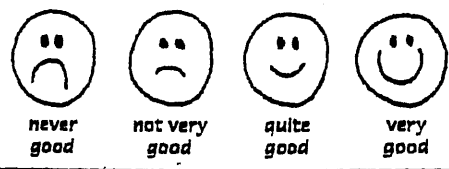
Children present	
Vocabulary used by staff –if appropriate	
Vocabulary used by children- if appropriate	
Observation notes	



COMMUNICATION

NAME _____ DATE _____

Body language ... what am I like at it?



1	Eye contact					
2	Facial expression					
3	Gestures					
4	Distance					
5	Touch					
6	Fidgeting					
7	Posture					
8	Personal appearance					

Appendix 9

Parent(s) interview interview no.
date _____

Note: All interviews must begin with an introductory discussion, reiterating why this is being done and the guarantee of confidentiality (with exception of child protection issues). Parents will be encouraged to ask questions and add comments of their own.

I am conducting this interview to find out more about your son. In this way, I may be in a better position to help him to reduce or control his aggression. If we can do this, he will be in a better position to mix with mainstream children.

This interview is not to find blame, but to move your son forward towards a happier and successful life.

SECTION 1

THESE QUESTIONS ARE ABOUT YOUR SON'S BIRTH AND EARLY YEARS

Q1 Do you have any other children? Yes/No. If yes, please give details

Q2 How was the pregnancy of your son (in my class)? Were there any problems? Yes/No. If yes, please give details

Prompts – caesarean section, premature, incubator, medical diagnosis

Q3 Who were the main carers for your son up to his fifth birthday?

Prompts – Were there any changes in carer? Was there one or more carers?

SECTION 2
THESE QUESTIONS ARE ABOUT YOUR SON'S EARLY YEARS AT SCHOOL

Q4 Did your son attend a nursery or play group? Yes/No. If yes, please give details, including his behaviour there.

Prompts – Did he enjoy the placement. How did he cope with other children? How did he cope with the staff? Was he able to leave the main carer happily?

Q5 How did your son cope with attending his first school? (i.e. reception). Please give details, including his behaviour?

Prompts – Did he enjoy early years? Did he make academic and social progress ? How did he cope with other children? How did he cope with the staff? Was he able to leave the main carer happily?

Q6 What were the first signs that your son was not coping with mainstream school? Please give details, including your son's age at the time.

Prompts – What was done to help your son? Do you think more could have been done to help him? If so, what?

Q7 Why do you think your son experienced difficulties in mainstream school?

Prompts – Being in a large class. Following set rules. Less attention from adults.

SECTION 3

THESE QUESTIONS ARE ABOUT YOUR SON'S MAIN CARERS

Q8 Are you able to leave your son with other carers now? Yes/no Please give details. _____

Prompts – Does your son cope well being left with other carers? Who do you leave him with?

Q9 Your son has shown some aggression in school. In our school we use personal interventions. Staff can support each other and change over if we need to. Also, our time with the children is limited. If your child is aggressive at home this must be more difficult. What are your best strategies for dealing with your son if/when he becomes aggressive?

Q10 There are times when I can feel angry with a child, particularly if he has hurt me. We must all feel like this sometimes. How do you cope when you are going through a difficult time with your son?

Prompts – Use of personal intervention. Use of rewards. Use of consequences. Shouting. Smacking. Tell me a time when your child made you feel angry.

THESE QUESTION ARE ABOUT YOUR OPINIONS OF YOUR SON'S
SCHOOLING SO FAR

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no text or other markings on the paper.

Questionnaire for mainstream school teacher working on our inclusion programme

The reason for this questionnaire is to ascertain the views of mainstream teachers about children who have emotional, behavioural and/or social difficulties.

All replies are confidential to myself. They will not be passed to other school staff.

This interview is in two parts. The first part refers to a child (or children) you have taught whom you or others have identified as having emotional, behavioural and/or social difficulties and attended mainstream school full time.

The second part refers to the experience of including a child from our special school into your classroom.

Please answer each question as fully as you can. If you need extra space use a separate sheet, or use the back of these papers. The number of lines given for replies do not reflect the length of expected answer. Just write what you think is relevant.

If you do not wish to answer a question, or have no comments, leave that question, then go on to the next one.

The term 'special school staff' refers to all staff from our special school, not just our inclusion worker.

Thank you for taking time to complete this questionnaire. Your views are important in helping to make the process of inclusion more successful for our children.

Appendix 10 cont.

Questionnaire number ____

All replies are confidential. I will seek your permission to use your replies in my final report. Schools and staff will remain anonymous.

If you do not wish to answer a question, go to the next one. Continue on separate sheets if you wish.

PART 1

Have you taught a child in your class whom you believe had emotional, behavioural or social difficulties? (Not including the child from our school).

Yes/no (please circle). If yes, please answer the questions below. If no, please go to part two.

Details of the child. (Optional sheets are provided at the end of this questionnaire for details of up to no more than 2 other children)

Sex: male/female. Initials of child (optional – this is to help you) _____

Year group: _____

Academic year you taught this child _____

Did you receive any support for this child, (e.g. advice from other professionals, additional assistant hours). Yes/no (Please circle). Please give details.

Which strategies were the most successful?

Which strategies were the least successful? (Please add any extra details, e.g. if you knew why some strategies would not work with this particular child).

Is the child still attending a mainstream school? Yes/no (Please circle). If not, please state which type of school placement the now child has (if known).

This part refers to the time you have included one of our children in your class. Please continue on a separate sheet, or on the back of this paper if you wish.

This section refers to your initial experience of including one of our children to your class. Please add any other comments that you feel are relevant.

Q1 At the beginning of the inclusion process, how prepared (from training, support, experience etc.) did you feel to include this child in your class?

Very well prepared	Well prepared	Adequately prepared	Under prepared	Not prepared at all
1	2	3	4	5

[illegible]

Q2 At the beginning of the inclusion process, how much *relevant* support did you receive from our special school staff to include our child into your class?

Very well supported	Well supported	Adequately supported	Under supported	Not supported at all
1	2	3	4	5

[illegible]

Q3 After approximately 3 months of the inclusion process, how prepared to teach (from training, support, experience etc.) did you feel to include this child in your class?

Please circle the number that corresponds closest to your reply.

Very well prepared	Well prepared	Adequately prepared	Under prepared	Not prepared at all
1	2	3	4	5

Please give details.

Q4 After approximately 3 months of the inclusion process, how much *relevant* support did you receive from our special school staff to include our child into your class?

Please circle the number that corresponds closest to your reply.

Very well supported	Well supported	Adequately supported	Under supported	Not supported at all
1	2	3	4	5

Please give details

Q5 Was there anything we did which made this inclusion process better for you?

Yes/no (please circle). Please give details.

[illegible]

Yes/no. Please give details.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Section 2

This section refers to approximately 6 months or more after the start of the inclusion programme.

Q7 Were there any benefits to the children in the class (including the person on the inclusion programme) from this process of inclusion?

Yes/no (please circle). Please give details.

Q8 Do you feel that you have benefited as a teacher due to this inclusion process?

Yes/no (please circle). Please give details.

Q9 Were there any problems during the inclusion process?

Yes/no (please circle). If so, please give details.

Please add any other comments you feel are relevant.

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you wish.)

Thank you for taking time to complete this questionnaire. Your views are valuable in improving our inclusion process. All replies are confidential and will not be passed to other staff in schools. I will seek your permission to use your replies in my final report. Schools and staff will remain anonymous.

Details of boys engaged in this study

All names are pseudonyms.

Alex. Year 4.

- Has attended our school for 5 terms. Before this attended a nurture group but had to leave when it was closed.
- Lives with Mum. Mum has a new partner. Alex shows some jealousy of this new partner whilst at school, but Mum reports no problems of this nature at home. Sees Dad and his half sister on rare occasions.
- Now attends mainstream school for one day per week with full support from inclusion worker

Alex is a bright boy who lacks confidence in his abilities. He joins in all lessons, but frequently says his work is "no good". With positive encouragement he is able to work for short periods independently. However, work must be carefully graded to ensure success. He will suddenly become frustrated with his work and then throw his pencil pot across the room. He then usually tries to hurt others and/or himself, e.g. kick another person or bang his fists against his own head. He then says that he wishes he were dead and that he will kill himself because no-one cares. Over the last year he has had fewer serious incidents, using verbal abuse rather than physical. When he does become violent at school he shouts about problems at home, e.g. his sister annoying him.

Alex responds well to staff, enjoying jokes. He does not like any physical contact with staff. There are many times when he is very happy in school. He shows this by singing and dancing to make others laugh!

Ryan. Year 4

- Has attended our school for 5 terms. Before this attended a nurture group but had to leave when it was closed.
- Lives with Mum and 2 older sisters. Also has older sister who has a baby. Shows some affection for his niece. Has recently seen Dad who has been away from the home for some time. Dad is due to return home soon. Ryan is pleased about this, but also expresses some anxiety.
- Now attends mainstream school for one hour per week with our inclusion worker.

Ryan has made good progress in his academic abilities over the last year. Originally his abilities were low. During this time Ryan was embarrassed by his lack of skills and became violent if he could not, or believed he could not do the work. He would become very frustrated if he could not immediately understand

All names are pseudonyms

the work, but complained if it was too easy. This made teaching him quite difficult. However, he now has much more confidence now, and joins in all lessons. Although he has some problems spelling, he will now write independently using phonic knowledge. He is able to read simple texts and is proud of this. He is very able in numeracy, particularly in addition and subtraction. He enjoys being the first to solve calculations and is able to explain his methods.

Ryan is very athletic. He enjoys sports but needs support to keep calm if he is losing. He will attempt to control others in the group and so needs careful observation. Whilst he does not now use violence, he will intimidate people using words and body language. His aim is to be 'top dog'. He does not show any open regard for staff, probably because he would see this as a weakness. He does not like physical contact with staff, but very rarely he will lean against us, pretending he has not noticed this. He does show regard in other ways, e.g. wanting to help staff.

Paul. Year 4

- Attended a mainstream school but was permanently excluded for violence. Before he was admitted to our school there was a period of 18 months when he had no education. Has attended our school for 2 terms.
- Lives with Mum and Dad. Mum has suffered from mental health problems since Paul's birth. Medication has helped her, along with Paul now attending school full time. His Dad was his main carer during his early years. His older sister has a child and lives opposite Paul. Paul sees them regularly. His older brother has a drug problem.

When Paul first attended our school he showed a lot of anxiety. He refused to stay in school and so needed to be brought into the building by Dad and staff. Staff used a personal intervention on Paul whilst Dad left. (Parents reported similar behaviour at his mainstream school. They stated that the mainstream school then said that they could not deal with him, so Paul was frequently sent home). After three similar episodes in a short space of time, Paul has settled into school. He is an excellent attender and says that he likes staff and school. If he becomes anxious, e.g. if he cannot or thinks he cannot do the work he can become withdrawn. However, he accepts support from known staff and is able to concentrate and complete his work. He is always proud of his achievements. In the early days, when he became withdrawn due to e.g. finding work difficult, not wanting to speak in front of the group, if a visitor was present he was able to follow staff's advice and quickly learn new strategies to deal with this. He now attempts to help other children who have similar difficulties. Paul has not had any serious incidents since the initial three, five months ago.

Paul has expressed his fear of being sent back to mainstream school. We were concerned that he may deliberately break rules in order to stay in our school. We have given him assurances that he will not go to mainstream school until he

Appendix 11 cont.

is ready. There are still times when he can become very anxious and his bottom lip trembles. He is helped to overcome his anxiety by staff speaking reassuringly to him.

Paul does not like to be touched by staff. He now allows us to stand close by. He shows lots of regard for staff verbally, e.g. saying how we are the 'best'. He is very popular in class because he is consistently nice to everyone.

Chris. Year 3

- Previously attended a mainstream school. However, his attendance was very poor. He has attended our school for 2 terms.
- Lives with his Mum and two older sisters. His Dad left home when he started at our school. This has upset him and his Mum. He sees his Dad very regularly.

Chris's attendance at mainstream school was very poor. This has been increased at our school to 50%, but this still needs improving. When he is at school he appear

very happy. We have never had a serious incident from him. He can be embarrassed if

he cannot, or thinks he cannot do his work, but he accepts adult help and then tries hard. His skills in literacy and numeracy have improved and he is proud of this. He will play with other children, but he also likes to play solitary, e.g. drawing. There appears to be little problem with his peers, although they do show some anger that he misses so much school, particularly as his parents' appear to not only condone it, but possibly encourage it.

Chris is an physically affectionate boy, although this has reduced recently, possibly because the older boys see this as 'sissy'. He is very kind, frequently bringing things in to share with the other children and staff.

Michael. Year 3

- Attended our school for 2 terms.
- Lives in a children's home. Parents have given their voluntary permission for this, but are seeking to have him back home. He has one younger brother. He sees his parents once per week, and looks forward to these supervised visits. His behaviour can be difficult just before and after these visits. However, this is improving.

Michael seeks a lot of adult attention. He deliberately breaks rules, probably in order to receive adult attention. This is largely overcome by staff being proactive and giving him attention for positive reasons, whilst attempting to

All names are pseudonyms

ignore negative things. He will test boundaries with all staff, but then become very upset if he receives negative consequences. He frequently looks sad and says, amongst other things, that he misses his family. His Grandmother has recently moved abroad, and Michael misses her. It is rare for Michael to cry, even when he looks very sad. It is possible that he breaks rules in order to receive our harshest consequences and then cries bitterly, blaming staff for his present unhappiness. This could be his only way of being able to expressing sad feelings. Afterwards he is quiet and thoughtful. The other children tend to avoid Michael since he is unpredictable and rarely co-operates with them. Instead he prefers adult company. This can be a cause for concern with his peers, who can become jealous of any extra attention he may receive. Michael frequently seeks out adults for attention and physical affection. This physical affection can turn sexual, so staff are alert to this. The other children see him as 'babyish' and have little time for him.

Michael can suddenly bounce back from feeling sad, and become an apparently happy boy. He takes great fun in lots of things, e.g. singing and dancing to music. He rarely lacks confidence, enjoying being the center of attention.

Matt. Year 2

- Attended a mainstream school but joined our school before being permanently excluded. Has attended our school for 5 months (the first two months were part time).
- Lives with his Mum, Stepdad and four older brothers. One brother is diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity disorder. Does not see natural father.
- Is diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome. Takes medication for this

Matt needs a lot of adult attention to follow rules. He responds extremely well to positive praise and positive role models. When he first arrived at our school he threw objects and kicked staff. We had to use a personal intervention whilst Mum and Stepdad left school. Matt screamed to go home. His Mum reported that in his previous school he would be sent home for violent behaviour, and this appeared to be what he wanted. After three similar incidents in the first month, these became rare, and have remained so. He finds it intolerable to talk about any serious incidents he has had, but this is improving. He has been able to answer questions in his interviews for this work, albeit at a basic level.

Matt thrives on positive adult attention and positions of responsibility. He has learned to trust a few adults and so turns to them if he is being teased or upset by another child. His Mum reports lots of problems at home still, but this is improving.

David. Year 2

- Attended a mainstream school but joined our school before being permanently excluded. Attended our school for 5 months. (The first three months were part time).
- Previously lived with Mum but she found him difficult to cope with. Mum and Dad are separated. Now lives with Dad.
- Diagnosed as having autistic spectrum disorder. Takes medication for this.

When David first came to our school he found it very difficult to concentrate for short periods. He was impulsive and would run around the classroom looking for things to amuse him. We used a personal restraint when he attempted to run out of the school. This made him very angry and hence violent. During this time he would scream and spit to go home. Similar incidents have occurred but they have become less severe and less frequent. We have to be careful not to give him too much attention since he then becomes jealous of other children and will then do something to upset them, e.g. say something unkind. Due to his occasional unkind behaviours and the amount of adult attention he takes he is not well liked amongst his peers. This is also made more difficult since he is younger and less mature than the others (other than Matt). He requires a lot of adult attention, but responds extremely well to positive attention and withdrawal of attention if he says something inappropriate. He suddenly seeks adult physical affection by giving them an unexpected bear hug (fortunately he is quite small!). Although he does not like doing his work he completes it in order to receive the rewards and freetime. He now appears very happy in school, often dancing about and sharing jokes with staff.

Interview with child after a serious incident**Incident number 1. David**

Note: all interviews must begin with an introductory discussion, reiterating why this is being done and a guarantee of confidentiality. Children will be told they can terminate the interview at any time. Children will also be encouraged to ask any questions of their own.

These questions will be asked, but not necessarily using these exact words. This will depend upon the child.

Q1 Do you remember the problem when...

You tried to run away and staff had to hold you

Yes

Q2 Tell me what happened

David looked very worried and said "*I won't do it again*".

The interview was abandoned since David looked stressed.

Q3 Is there something that you wish did not happen? If so, what?**Q4 Do you think that staff could have done something to have stopped someone from being hurt? If so, what?****Q5 Do you think that another child/children could have done something to have stopped someone from being hurt? If so, what?****Q6 Is there anything a member of staff could do in the future to stop someone being hurt? If so, what?****Q7 Is there anything else you would like to say?**

Appendix 12.2

Interview with child after a serious incident

Incident number 10. David

Note: all interviews must begin with an introductory discussion, reiterating why this is being done and a guarantee of confidentiality. Children will be told they can terminate the interview at any time. Children will also be encouraged to ask any questions of their own.

These questions will be asked, but not necessarily using these exact words. This will depend upon the child.

Q1 Do you remember the problem when...

You wouldn't get out of the swimming pool. You splashed Chris. Staff pulled you out of the water

Yes

Q2 Tell me what happened

Splashing and Ryan got me out

Q3 Is there something that you wish did not happen? If so, what?

Didn't have basketball (referring to consequence of no freetime)

Q4 Do you think that staff could have done something to have stopped someone from being hurt? If so, what?

Get me out of the baths incase I drown

Q5 Do you think that another child/children could have done something to have stopped someone from being hurt? If so, what?

Helped me get out. (Like Ryan did?) Yes.

Q6 Is there anything a member of staff could do in the future to stop someone being hurt? If so, what?

Get me out

Q7 Is there anything else you would like to say?

In case I drown

Interview with child after a serious incident**Incident number 15 David**

Note: all interviews must begin with an introductory discussion, reiterating why this is being done and a guarantee of confidentiality. Children will be told they can terminate the interview at any time. Children will also be encouraged to ask any questions of their own.

These questions will be asked, but not necessarily using these exact words. This will depend upon the child.

Q1 Do you remember the problem when...

You had annoyed others and refused to work. You went to hurt Chris with sharp crayons?

Yes

Q2 Tell me what happened

I had been nasty to people, hurting people's feelings. (Do you remember turning to Chris?) I forgot.

Q3 Is there something that you wish did not happen? If so, what?

I didn't have freetime. I wish I did have it. (Do you wish you hadn't held crayons to Chris?). Yes

Q4 Do you think that staff could have done something to have stopped someone from being hurt? If so, what?

Consequences. Hold me until hometime.

Q5 Do you think that another child/children could have done something to have stopped someone from being hurt? If so, what?

Stopped being nasty to me. Michael was saying rude things about his girlfriend and he swore at me.

Q6 Is there anything a member of staff could do in the future to stop someone being hurt? If so, what?

(What if someone swears at you, what will you do?) I'll tell the teacher.

(What if you are swearing, what should I do?). Hold me.

Q7 Is there anything else you would like to say?

I'll follow the rules. Never be nasty to others. Be good.

Interview with child after a serious incident**Incident number 11 Michael**

Note: all interviews must begin with an introductory discussion, reiterating why this is being done and a guarantee of confidentiality. Children will be told they can terminate the interview at any time. Children will also be encouraged to ask any questions of their own.

These questions will be asked, but not necessarily using these exact words. This will depend upon the child.

Q1 Do you remember the problem when...

On Friday at hometime I had to give you support. You then chose to be calm and went home on the taxi.

Yes

Q2 Tell me what happened

I was a bit cross because I didn't want anyone to hold my hand.

Q3 Is there something that you wish did not happen? If so, what?

Nothing. I wish I didn't be naughty and you had to hold me on the floor.

Q4 Do you think that staff could have done something to have stopped someone from being hurt? If so, what?

That's it

Q5 Do you think that another child/children could have done something to have stopped someone from being hurt? If so, what?

No.

Q6 Is there anything a member of staff could do in the future to stop someone being hurt? If so, what?**Q7 Is there anything else you would like to say?**

Next time I'll be good

Interview with child after a serious incident

Incident number 16 Michael

Note: all interviews must begin with an introductory discussion, reiterating why this is being done and a guarantee of confidentiality. Children will be told they can terminate the interview at any time. Children will also be encouraged to ask any questions of their own.

These questions will be asked, but not necessarily using these exact words. This will depend upon the child.

Q1 Do you remember the problem when...

You went to run and use the gym equipment? I supported you and you pulled away. Staff held you.

Yes.

Q2 Tell me what happened

I was kicking staff and I got restrained.

Q3 Is there something that you wish did not happen? If so, what?

I wish I could have gone to play again on the apparatus. I couldn't go out to play because I didn't sit on the bench properly.

Q4 Do you think that staff could have done something to have stopped someone from being hurt? If so, what?

Let me have 5 minutes time out. Let us run. (but we couldn't run because of the apparatus). If we took some things out of the P.E. lesson then.

Q5 Do you think that another child/children could have done something to have stopped someone from being hurt? If so, what?

Just to help me. Just to help me stop running and help me stay on bench.

Q6 Is there anything a member of staff could do in the future to stop someone being hurt? If so, what?

You could just move some apparatus. Then we can run – 'cos I love running. We have to get away from the Green Goblin (running game children play in the hall).

Q7 Is there anything else you would like to say?

No thank you.

Interview with child after a serious incident**Incident number 2 Matt**

Note: all interviews must begin with an introductory discussion, reiterating why this is being done and a guarantee of confidentiality. Children will be told they can terminate the interview at any time. Children will also be encouraged to ask any questions of their own.

These questions will be asked, but not necessarily using these exact words. This will depend upon the child.

Q1 Do you remember the problem when...

We had to hold you to keep you safe?

Matt nodded and looked worried. It was explained to him that staff were not angry but wanted to help.

Interview was abandoned since it was causing stress to Matt.

Q2 Tell me what happened**Q3 Is there something that you wish did not happen? If so, what?****Q4 Do you think that staff could have done something to have stopped someone from being hurt? If so, what?****Q5 Do you think that another child/children could have done something to have stopped someone from being hurt? If so, what?****Q6 Is there anything a member of staff could do in the future to stop someone being hurt? If so, what?****Q7 Is there anything else you would like to say?**

Interview with child after a serious incident

Incident number 6. Matt

Note: all interviews must begin with an introductory discussion, reiterating why this is being done and a guarantee of confidentiality. Children will be told they can terminate the interview at any time. Children will also be encouraged to ask any questions of their own.

These questions will be asked, but not necessarily using these exact words. This will depend upon the child.

Q1 Do you remember the problem when...

You were going home and you didn't follow instructions. We had to hold you to keep you safe.

Yes

Q2 Tell me what happened

I'd been naughty and you needed to hold me. My mom came. It would be better if you didn't hold me. I won't run about.

Q3 Is there something that you wish did not happen? If so, what?

Nothing.

Q4 Do you think that staff could have done something to have stopped someone from being hurt? If so, what?

Just made me sit on a chair to be calm.

Q5 Do you think that another child/children could have done something to have stopped someone from being hurt? If so, what?

Don't know.

Q6 Is there anything a member of staff could do in the future to stop someone being hurt? If so, what?

Not hold me. Ask me to sit on a chair

Q7 Is there anything else you would like to say?

Types of personal intervention (restraint)

In our school we use many different strategies to encourage a child to use socially appropriate behaviours, e.g. ignoring, giving 'space' (i.e. moving away from the child), using a calm voice. However, there are times when a child becomes violent. If a member of staff believes that a child is going to, or is physically hurting someone, then we will use a 'personal intervention', i.e. restraint. Staff are trained in ways of holding a child during such circumstances. There are different types of restraint, depending upon the circumstances and the child. There are also different levels of restraint, from merely holding a child's forearms to a full body restraint where the child has little free movement. The main types of restraint are given below.

13.1 One person escort

This refers to one adult standing by the side of the child. The adult's right hand holds the child's right forearm. The adult's left arm is held around the back of the child, with the left hand holding the child's left forearm. (This can be reversed i.e. adult standing on child's left side). In this way the child still has some degree of movement, particularly their legs/feet.

13.2 Two person escort

Here two adults support the child. One adult stands either side of the child. Both adults put their arm around the back of the child (adult on left side uses right arm, adult on right side uses left arm), then each holds the forearm of the child. The adult's outer arm is then used to hold the child's forearm nearer to them. In this way the child still is able to move his legs and feet but movement is more restricted since both of the child's arms are held into his body.

13.3 Personal intervention – supine position

Here the child is lying on the floor with his feet together and his arms outstretched (as in crucifix position) with the palms pointing downwards. One

adult kneels either side of the child with their knees pointing towards the child's arms. These adults hold the nearest child's arm to them. The adult uses her/his hands to as a 'bridge' over the child's upper and lower arm, i.e. the adults' fingers and thumb are touching the floor with the child's arm in between. In this way the child cannot move his arm but adults are not gripping – hence there is less chance of causing pain and/or bruising to the child. Another adult holds the child's legs if he kicks.

APPENDIX 14

Incident form to be completed by staff when they witness an aggressive incident.

Name D. at bathsIncident form (10)

Date	Antecedent	Aggression? Write Y or N	Type of aggression (if applicable)	After incident	Other comments
8.1.04	D was in pool for first time, he had followed instructions until a few minutes before when he was splashing with another pupu. When it was time to get out the pool he refused, and began throwing water at staff members. Another pupu was requested to help bring DL towards the side of the pool so as staff could lift him out of the pool. During this the pupu was scratched on the neck.	N Y	Scratch to another pupu	Pupu needed support from staff. Once in the car he did calm down.	

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APPENDIX 15

Interview with staff

Q1 This interview is about incident no. 10, which you have written on the observation sheet. Would you like to add any more?

Q2 What do you feel the child could have done instead, to avoid hurting someone?

The child involved needed to follow the
given instructions

Q3 Do you think you (or another member of staff) could have supported him more before, during and/or after the incident? If so, what?

Before The build up to the incident was not
noticed as the pupil was following instructions

During very difficult as pupil was in the
pool and staff were fully dressed.

After Three members of staff were giving
full support

Q4 Is there anything else you would like to add?

The pupil obviously did not want to get out
of the pool, however, staff did not realise
this until the incident occurred. This was a
first time experience for everyone involved.
Next time we would take him out of the pool
before the end of the lesson without any
prompting.

Lesson Observation Sheet

Date 21/04/04 Lesson no.28 Title of lesson Angry Arthur, by Oram, H. and Kitamura, S. Random House Children's books.
Person(s) completing form teacher and usual assistant

Staff Teacher

Children present Alex, Ryan, Paul, Michael, Chris, Matt and David

Vocabulary used by staff -if appropriate	
Vocabulary used by children- if appropriate	

Observation notes

The teacher explained how the story to be read was about how a boy felt angry and was able to 'see' his anger. This was linked to people having a 'short fuse' and so lost their temper quickly (as explained to the children previously). Ryan said he remembered this (he had repeated this to another child who was about to lose his temper). Ryan then added "*They should give him (Arthur) an old English beating*". Ryan continued with this, miming giving himself 'a beating'. He was half smiling, and appeared to be enjoying having the attention of the others in the class. The teacher said that this was not appropriate. Ryan added "*I wasn't beat*". He now looked serious. Paul said "*If he carries on he isn't going to get his own way*".

The story was read aloud. The teacher then reiterated how Arthur had got angry but couldn't remember why. This was linked to how the children themselves may feel at times, i.e. not remember why they originally became angry. Ryan said that you can remember when you get angry. The teacher agreed. The children were then invited to discuss times when they became angry.

Ryan said "*He should be put across his Dad's lap and smacked*".

Paul said "*When I was little I kept on running around and knocked the vase over*". Paul didn't appear to want to discuss this any more, and sat quietly. David showed a lot of interest, asking Paul what he did when he was angry.

Matt said "*I got angry when I first came to this school*", but gave no further response. He said this confidently. The teacher

said she remembered this and asked him whom he was angry with. Matt replied "Don't know". Matt was assured that it was OK to discuss this now, but he became more embarrassed. The teacher reassured him that he is doing well now.

Alex gave some reasons for Matt being angry at that time.

Michael said *"When I was 7 I lost my anger. Mom and Dad wouldn't let me go to the park so I was sick"*. Michael mimed being sick, and looked serious.

Ryan said *"I was angry today when people were making a noise but I didn't show my anger"*. The teacher asked him why. Ryan replied *"I've learnt not to"*.

Paul said *"I was angry with myself when I first came to this school"*. The teacher asked if he was angry with staff, and gave reassurances that this was OK. Paul said he was not angry with staff but said *"I was scared"*. Paul added how he remembered Matt also being scared on his first day at our school.

Alex said *"I trashed my bedroom once when my sister was picking on me, but then I calmed down and cleaned my room"*.

Michael said *"When I first went to **** (my mainstream school) it was a nightmare. There were lots of people around me and I was embarrassed"*. Michael explained how the people touched him (unintentionally?) and the staff did little to help.

Chris said *"I was angry when my Dad left me after the fireworks party"*. Chris gave more details, saying how his Dads had left the home after the fireworks party, but had not told Chris of these intentions. Chris said this made him feel angry with his Dad. He said he went to his bedroom but he couldn't open the door, so his sister opened it for him. Chris added *"I was even more angry with the door because I was too short to open it"*. Chris then told of him throwing a small speaker up the wall.

David said *"I was angry when you held me down"*. The teacher attempted to encourage David to add more, but he looked embarrassed and looked away from the teacher. He then changed his topic of conversation to a time he felt angry at the Wacky Warehouse (a children's indoor play area). He said *"A girl said I was ugly at the Wacky (a children's play area). I don't know if I was angry"*.

The lesson ended with the teacher thanking the children for their comments.

Lesson Observation Sheet

Date 12/01/04 **Lesson no.8** **Title of lesson** With the compliments of the class. **Person(s)** completing form teacher and assistant

Staff Teacher

Children present Alex, Ryan, Paul, Michael, Chris, Matt and David

Vocabulary used by staff –if appropriate	
Vocabulary used by children-if appropriate	

Observation notes

Teacher put up 7 pieces of A4 paper on the board. Each one had a child's name on it. This created a lot of interest. Teacher explained that we were going to give each other compliments, and that these would be written on the paper for each child. A description of a compliment was given. The children were keen to talk. To begin with, the children offered comments similar to the prayers they sometimes offer, e.g. Alex said "*I hope David has a good day*". The teacher gave examples of what a compliment was., and suggested that the children say something that another child was good at. Again the children were keen to offer compliments.

Michael said "*Ryan is good at swimming*".

Paul said "*David is funny*".

Michael said "*I like it when Matt plays snooker*".

Matt said "*Michael is quite good at writing and he shares things*".

Alex said "Chris is a good friend. Paul is a good friend too".

Chris said "Ryan writes good stories".

Paul said "Alex is good at reading".

The children were not embarrassed when they were given a compliment. Only David appeared unconcerned with this part of the lesson, singing/humming to himself. He did join in when encouraged.

The teacher then asked the children to describe how they felt when they said something nice to someone else.

Matt said "Happy - but don't know why"

Alex said "Happy".

Michael said "Excited".

The teacher then asked how they felt when someone said something nice about themselves.

Paul said "Happy because they're saying nice things".

Alex said "Good - someone appreciates me".

Ryan said "I didn't mind".

Chris said "I felt really happy".

Matt said "I felt embarrassed".

David said "I felt happy". The teacher invited David to say something nice about someone since he had not said anything earlier. David said "Matt has friends".

The lesson ended with the teacher saying how it makes a better class if we say and hear positive things. All children were smiling. Teacher emphasised how we are a good group and we do give lots of compliments. We will continue to do this.

4



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• Worksheet •



COMMUNICATION

NAME _____

DATE _____

Body language ... what am I like at it?



1	Eye contact			✓		
2	Facial expression		✓			
3	Gestures		✓		crossed out M	
4	Distance				✓✓	
5	Touch			✓		
6	Fidgeting			✓		
7	Posture		✓			
8	Personal appearance		crossed out	✓	crossed out	